Pakistan: Secretariat Denies Bhutto Purchased UK Mansion

BK1006153896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Jun 96 pp 1, 9

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: A spokesman of the Prime Minister's Secretariat has contradicted a report published in SUNDAY EXPRESS, London and lifted by some national newspapers alleging that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari had purchased mansion in Surrey.

Describing the report as baseless and malicious the spokesman said that since becoming Prime Minister in 1993, she had been to London only twice — once for a meeting there and the second time when she was in transit. The Prime Minister had never been to Surrey had never met any estate agent and had not purchased any property there.

Pakistan: Counsel Asked To Sue UK Paper Over Property Allegations

BK1106072596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, MNA [Member of National Assembly], has asked his counsel in London to sue the SUNDAY EXPRESS for publishing a news item about the alleged purchase of a mansion in Surrey. He said in Islamabad that the publication of the fabricated news was aimed at damaging the reputation of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her family. Mr. Zardari said it is not for the first time that her political rivals have come up with this sort of tactic, which is totally baseless.

Pakistan: Tank Deal With Ukraine To Be Concluded Before 30 Jun

BK1006122896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Jun 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan and Ukraine are at a very advanced stage to strike a deal under which Kiev will provide 300 plus new main battle tanks (MBTs), currently rated as the best mobile vehicle in the Soviet system.

"Technical discussions between the two countries have almost been completed, and the deal will be finalized within next few weeks," said official sources.

They said: "Talk on the financial package and the mode of payments, coupled with terms and conditions of the $450 to $600 million T-80UD deal will start shortly."

Highly-placed-sources said the Ukranian T-80UD had been selected following a comprehensive evaluation and trials of three vehicles: T-80UD (Kiev), T-72 (Polish) and T-86(China). "Towards the end of 1995, a military delegation, comprising all the technical people from Pakistan, visited Ukraine for inspection of facilities which help manufacture the vehicle, besides assessing and witnessing the capabilities of spares and logistic support system," said the sources.

These sources say spares of T-80UD are not only available in Ukraine and Russia, but these can also be bought from several other independent states of the Commonwealth.

"Pakistan, however, is buying spares along with tanks, with the possibility of making them in Pakistan through transfer of technology," said the sources.

Defense sources confirmed that the T-80UD is the "best vehicle" in the Russian system, which will be inducted into the Pakistan Army for the first time".

Ukraine, said the sources, has also offered parts and training package, and the whole deal with cost Pakistan around $1.5 million per vehicle.

"Things are moving very fast, as the Pakistan-Ukraine tank deal has to be concluded before June 30 following which Kiev will start manufacturing new vehicles to be delivered to Pakistan in phase," said the sources.

Pakistan: Islamabad Reports 3 Killed in 2 Bomb Explosions

BK1006162196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three people were reported killed and some others injured in two bomb explosions in the main bazaar of Kamoke today. The explosions also caused some damage to some shops. Rescue measures are underway and investigations into the incident have started.

Pakistan: 7 Killed, Dozens Injured in 3 Bomb Blasts

BK1006160196 Hong Kong AFP in English 1543 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, Pakistan, June 10 (AFP) — At least seven people were killed and dozens injured Monday [10 June] when three bombs rocked Pakistan's industrial city of Gujranwala, police said.

The first bomb ripped through a passenger bus, killing four people and injuring 19 others. Almost simultaneously, two more bombs went off in the nearby Kamoke bazaar, killing three people, including a 10-year old boy.

FOREIGN
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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief on Summit, Iraq

NC0806190396 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Telephone interview with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid in Cairo by MBC moderator Fatimah Bint-Huhu in London—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Bint-Huhu] Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid, Good evening, the invitation to an Arab summit fulfills a hope long nurtured by the Arab League. What do you expect from the Arab summit?

['Abd-al-Majid] We consider this invitation to be an important step toward restoring Arab solidarity and bringing the Arabs together as a prelude to holding an expanded Arab summit. An expanded Arab summit aims at emphasizing the Arab countries' concern for a fair, comprehensive, permanent, and balanced peace in the Middle East, a peace that will bring about complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories—the Golan heights, Lebanon, and Palestine—as well as an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This is my reaction to the summit. I want to express my pleasure with and appreciation of this important step. I believe that this step expresses the hopes of all Arab peoples.

[Bint-Huhu] Will the Arab League and its participants contribute to defining the agenda of the summit? Will the agenda be limited to the Arab-Israeli conflict?

['Abd-al-Majid] I believe that this is the basis of these moves and the invitation. The current time is appropriate to hold the summit. The Arab League is ready to cooperate fully and offer all it can. We have always believed in the importance of Arab summits, be they mini-summits or expanded ones.

[Bint-Huhu] Iraq will not be invited to the summit, as President Mubarak stated. Will the situation in Iraq be on the agenda?

['Abd-al-Majid] It is well known that Iraq adopts certain stances [words indistinct]. As for the other political conditions [words indistinct]. Let us call things by their names. Under the current circumstances, the issue of Iraq is remote in view of the sensitivity of this issue. Also, Iraq's stand on the peace process is well known. Iraq does not agree to the peace process.

Inter-Arab: Egypt's Musa, Arab League Chief on Cairo Arab Summit

NC0906103596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 9 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo 9 June (MENA)—Arab League Secreatary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid this morning received Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa at the Arab League headquarters.

During the meeting they discussed the arrangements for convening the Arab summit scheduled to take place in Cairo between 21 and 23 June.

After the meeting, 'Amr Musa stated that the Arab summit will take place at the Conferences Hall in Cairo on 21 June at the level of heads of state. He added that he discussed with 'Abd al-Majid the details of the expanded Arab summit and the preparations for it, emphasizing that it is not possible to separate the Arab League's role from the Arab summit in terms of concern and follow up.

'Amr Musa said that Egypt, being the host country, will send urgent messages containing invitations to the Arab leaders following the urgent contacts conducted by President Mubarak with a large number of Arab leaders last night. He added that the summit's agenda is still under study, as was shown at the Damascus tripartite summit. He added that the number and level of the participants will depend on the outcome of impending contacts.

For his part, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid noted that the Arab summit is a new step in the peace process, a move accepted by every Arab citizen. He said that the Arab League's role in the summit was discussed with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and that coordination is continuing in this respect.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the holding of this summit is a success for the Arab nation and for the pivotal and key issue—the peace process.

He noted that the Arab League welcomed the peace process in September 1991 in the League Council's Resolution 5092. This resolution, he said, gave legitimacy to the peace process and is the basis on which the Arab League acts in the peace process. He added that, in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab League Council had never passed such a resolution. He emphasized the importance of the highlighting of the two Arab plans for the peace process in a resolution by the Arab foreign ministers before the Madrid conference was held.

Asked whether the Arab summit will discuss Arab reconciliation, he said: I consider the gathering that will take place on 21 June as the first Arab meeting at this level since the Gulf crisis.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid noted that every Arab feels the need for Arab reconciliation, which is the dominant issue. It comes up for discussion whenever we speak about Arab solidarity, unity, and reconciliation, he added.

He said Arab sentiment is ready for a clearing of the Arab atmosphere and restoration of Arab solidarity. He added that this was the aim of the three leaders when they decided in Damascus to call for this summit.

The Arab League secretary general said the Arabs' reactions to the invitation to this summit are positive and encouraging. These reactions, he added, show concern for a comprehensive, just, and balanced peace in the region, especially as regards liberating the Arab territories and the Palestinian issue. These are the Arab countries' goals, which under the circumstances had to be manifested now in the call extended by the Damascus tripartite summit.

On the summit's venue, he said the League would have hosted the summit but there is a conference hall equipped with larger capabilities for holding such a conference.

On not inviting Iraq to this conference, he said Iraq has always been reserved about the peace process and that this decision was made at the leaders' level and that they must have their own reasons.

Concluding his statement, he said the Arab League will pursue its contacts to supplement Egyptian diplomacy's role because we feel that the holding of this summit is a success for the Arab nation and the peace process.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 4 Jun

NC1106065996

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 4 June edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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10. Appeal Made To Release al-Wasat Party Member
11. Writers Comment on Israeli Elections
12. MB Leader on Clash between Civilizations

RALLY HELD AGAINST PRESS LAW, TRIAL OF MB MEMBERS The main story is an unattributed 450-word report on pages 1 and 8 on a political rally held by the National Committee To Defend Prisoners of Conscience on 30 May at the Labor Party headquarters attended by, among others, Muslim Brotherhood Deputy General Guide Ma'mun al-Hudaybi. The main report covers the speech delivered by Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri, in which he urged the masses "to go out into the streets and hoist the banners of freedom, dignity, and independence and cheer Egypt and the Arab and Islamic nation against Zionist and U.S. hegemony and against the corruption spreading in the country, the emergency law, and tyranny." He called for a united front against corruption and tyranny and hailed the journalists' fight against the new press law, referring in that instance to the court sentence passed against AL-SHA'B editor Majdi Husayn on the basis of this law. On privatization, he says that the party is not against privatization but "against looting, sabotage, and foreigners' control of our national economy."

In a related 2,000-word report by Subhi Buhayri and Dawud Hasan that appears on page 6, more details are given of the speeches made by Shukri and others at the rally. In his speech, deputy MB general guide al-Hudaybi lambasted totalitarian governments for fighting freedom of speech and then touched on the issue of the trial of MB members before military courts, saying that these "trials have not weakened the determination of those who raised the banners of monotheism and carried the trust for 70 years, challenging the difficulties and dangers throughout the years. The MB, which they now call an illegal group, has participated in political life since 1938, during the time of occupation, and has remained present among the people all this time." After noting that the MB had members in the People's Assembly in 1984 and 1987, he asked: "Since when have we been an illegal group?" He then goes on to say: "The trial of 97 of the best young and old MB members before military courts is the best evidence that the government is trying to smash the entire Islamic tide. It is no secret to you that the latest group referred to the military court was basically charged with seeking to form a political party. I ask: Where are the lists of indictment of all those tried before military courts which the government has submitted?" Other speakers such as Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus, the committee's rapporteur, lashed out at the new press law, charging that "officials lied to journalists when they said that protective custody had been canceled, because there are 19 articles on protective custody in the amended law." SAWT AL-'ARAB editor 'Abd-al-'Azim Manaf voiced the view that journalists will win in the end, while Wafd Party member Muhammad 'Ulwan said that the military trials could affect many citizens "if this is not confronted decisively." National Progressive Unionist Grouping member 'Abd-al-Ghaffar Shukr spoke about democracy and stability and how interdependent they are.

EGYPTIAN POWS ISSUE, NETANYAHU'S EXPECTED STAND VIEWED

A 400-word report by Rabi' Shahin on pages 1 and 8 views the aftermath of the election of Binyamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister. It claims that Netanyahu will seek to build thousands of new settlements in the occupied territories and Jerusalem and negate the agreements concluded with the Palestinians. On the elections' effect on ties with Egypt, the report claims that "the new Israeli government under Netanyahu will not take any serious steps on the issue of Egyptian prisoners massacred by the bullets of the Israeli army's butchers in 1956 and 67." It adds that "the Likud government will seek to barter this issue for normalization and warmth in these relations and will seek to resolve it through bilateral negotiations with Cairo, so as to close the file for good."

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR APPOINTED

A 40-word report on page 1 says that Tal'at Rumayh has been appointed deputy chief editor of AL-SHA'B.

HABITAT MEETING DISMAYED BY COURT RULING AGAINST HUSAYN

A 90-word unattributed report on page 1 says that participants in the Islamic Habitat conference held in Istanbul were "dismayed" by the court sentence passed on AL-SHA'B chief editor Majdi Husayn.

OUTCOME OF ISRAELI ELECTIONS DETAILED

All of page 2 is devoted to the outcome of the Israeli elections. The main story details the elections programs of the political parties. There is a short biography of Netanyahu, a graph comparing the parties' seats in the Knesset since 1949, the difficult situation that will face the Arab minority, the success of two members of the Islamic Movement in entering the Knesset, the unexpected success of extremist Jewish parties, and the fall of Shim'on Peres. A boxed item on the same page cites a MA'ARIV report on Netanyahu's conditions for implementing the Oslo agreement, which he voiced at a secret meeting held one week before the elections.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST INTERIOR MINISTER'S SONS CONTINUES

The paper's campaign against Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi and his sons, the allegations of corruption, and the sons' exploitation of their father's position to become rich continues unabated. The whole of page 3 is devoted to this campaign. The major story claims to refute the interior minister's recent statements denying that his sons own property by publishing photocopies of documents purporting that one son, 'Adil, does own properties. Another item ridicules the claims of the second son, 'Ala' al-Alfi, of being in debt and lists the building contracts he won.

A related 3,000-word article by Dr. Muhammad Hilmi Murad on page 5 views the business activities of 'Ala' al-Alfi and calls for an investigation into the sources of his wealth based on al-Alfi's statements published in AL-AHRAM of 31 May, which the writer regards as "a public admission on his part of committing the crime of illegal gains, which is banned and punishable according to Law 62 of 1975."

COLUMNIST MOCKS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

In his 400-word column on page 6, Ahmad al-Siyufi ridicules the Consultative Council that late President al-Sadat set up and called it a family council, labelling it a "political scrap yard" for dismissed ministers and politicians to keep them away from joining the opposition. He accuses the council of being a rubber stamp and a cheering crowd for the president's speeches, adding that the "millions of pounds being spent from the people's blood on the family council to achieve great goals are turning it into a political scrap yard and a dump for political waste" which abuses journalists and equates them with drug dealers.

COURT REJECTS APPEAL AGAINST RELEASE OF 10 DETAINEES

A 100-word unattributed report on page 8 says that the Higher State Security Court rejected the interior minister's appeal against the criminal court's decision to release 10 professional people arrested three months ago. The report adds that the court on 10 June will look into a demand to renew their detention on the charge of belonging to the MB.

STUDY OF ISLAMIC CULTURE RECOMMENDED FOR UNIVERSITIES

A 200-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad on page 8 says the conference of the Islamic Universities League ended its sessions on 2 June with several recommendations, including the teaching of Islamic culture in all Arab and Islamic universities and holding a forum on 31 August on problems facing Islamic youths.

APPEAL MADE TO RELEASE AL-WASAT PARTY MEMBER

A 90-word item on page 8 says that an appeal has been made to the president and other officials to release 74-year old Mahmud Abu-Rayyah, who is a defendant in the case of the al-Wasat Party, due to his deteriorating health.

WRITERS COMMENT ON ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Comments on the outcome of the Israeli elections and the Likud's victory are covered in three separate articles. The first is by Dr. al-Shafi'i Bashir and appears on page 8. The article is very critical of Egypt's invitation to Binyamin Netanyahu, the "Arab and Islamic nation's worst enemy," to visit Cairo. The writer asks whether the Egypt Netanyahu is invited to visit is the politically weak one that is submissive to Israeli arrogance, which, in this case, is not the Egypt that is loved and respected, that led the Arab and Islamic world, and that stood firm against Zionism and its colonial ambitions in the region. He adds that the Egypt which invited Netanyahu "is not our Egypt. He who is invited to visit it is not welcome. Let lightning from heaven strike him the day he visits it."

The second article is a 3,000-word one by Dr. Mahjub 'Umar that appears on page 12. It is a relatively objective analysis of the outcome of the elections that "exposed the severe internal weakness in Israel's structure." The writer views the losses suffered by the two major parties and the gains made by the smaller and more extremist ones before pinpointing the weaknesses in the next Netanyahu government. According to this analysis, the first weakness is the U.S. Administration's stand, which "urged the election of Peres and the Labor Party" and which now "will undoubtedly seek to tame the new government's stand with covert and overt means." A second weakness according to the writer is the new reality in the region which Netanyahu has to face, noting that the next government "cannot change what has been implemented on the ground, specially with regard to settlements in areas handed back to the Palestinian Authority." He predicts that Netanyahu will have to face problems created by the settlers and the escalation in south Lebanon, but warns that the new leader will try to appear committed to the peace process while making sure that the negotiations will be a waste of time and provocative for the Palestinians, adding that this prevarication will continue until after the U.S. elections.

The third comment is by al-Sayyid al-Ghadban, also on page 12. In his 1,600-word article, the writer welcomes the election of Netanyahu, who "embodies the epitome of Israeli arrogance and barbarism and reflects the level of humiliation reached by a number of Arab rulers in their humiliating and submissive dealing with the Israelis." He voices the opinion that there are no differences between hawks and doves in Israel, that is between Peres and Netanyahu, but only a difference over methods, whereas Peres hid his real intentions behind a mask, Netanyahu comes unmasked and arrogant. The writer says that the outcome will be a big catastrophe for the Arab peoples, since the Arab leaders will try to divert Netanyahu's pressures by resorting to more repression in their own countries. But, he concludes, Netanyahu is welcome because he has inadvertently rendered the Arabs a great service and removed the deceptions of Peres, which deluded the Arabs at one time. He expects a new intifadah to sweep the region in an angry revolution unleashed by Netanyahu's "stupidity and arrogance."

MB LEADER ON CLASH BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS

The clash between civilizations is the main theme of the 1,500-word article by MB General Guide Mustafa Mashhur that appears on page 5. The issue of the Israeli elections is touched on briefly at the beginning of the article, when he bemoans the Arab media's interest in the Israeli elections and which party will win even though both are "two sides of the same coin that is full of hatred and scheming to usurp the territory, eliminate the Palestinian people, and impose hegemony on the region's countries," citing evidence of this their history and influence in the United States that backs them to force the Arabs to normalize relations. Taking a look at various "material civilizations in Europe, Asia, and the United States," he says that these civilizations have only brought ruin and destruction as attested by two world wars, the atomic bomb, the collapse of morals in society, decadence, and the spread of drugs and diseases, while they continued to rob the resources of others and tried to divert them from their creeds, specially the Islamic one. He then views the evils of communism, in which Jews played a major role, and its collapse before moving on to the corruption spread by European countries when they occupied Arab and Islamic countries and "helped the

Zionist enemy plant its entity at the heart of the Islamic nation." Moving on to democracy and Islam, he argues that "we do Islam an injustice when we compare it to democracy" since "Islam is a comprehensive religion while democracy is only one part of a different cultural phenomenon. There is no contradiction in this difference because there remains scope for agreement on some principles and values." He recalls a recent clarification by the MB saying that Islam approves pluralism and therefore "Islam does not categorically reject democracy but makes a condition that it does not make what is religiously illegal legal and what is legal illegal because God alone defines what is legal and what is not." In conclusion, he voices his belief that the Islamic civilization will in the end triumph because it belongs to God's religion but warns that Muslims should prepare for this through strong belief, unity, removal of differences, and cooperation against the enemies.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Forms Emergency Committee Under 'Arafat

JN1106081096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Committee of the Fatah Movement formed an emergency committee during its meeting in Gaza under President Yasir 'Arafat. The emergency committee comprises President Yasir 'Arafat as chairman, Sakhr Habash as deputy chairman, Hakam Bal'awi as secretary, and 'Abbas Zaki, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, Faysal al-Husayni, Zakariya al-Agha, 'Uthman Abu-Gharbiyah, Rawhi Fattuh, Salwa Abu-Khadra, Marwan al-Barghuthi, and Salah al-Qudwah as members.

[Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic at 0520 GMT on 11 June carries an interview with Marwan al-Barghuthi, member of the Legislative Council and chief of the Fatah Higher Committee in the West Bank, in which he says: "In light of recent developments at the Israeli and local levels, the Fatah Central Committee noted at its meeting in Gaza two days ago the need to enhance Fatah's internal situation." Al-Barghuthi adds that the Central Committee decided to form a 12-member emergency committee "to revitalize the movement's activities" and to "find ways to rearrange the internal situation."]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat Says Netanyahu Government's 'Options' Limited

JN1006165696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1115 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Interview with Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority, by 'Arif Salim in Jericho on 10 June; from "Today's Events" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Salim] Dr. 'Urayqat, good evening. A meeting was held today between you and the Israeli side in Jericho to study the post-Israeli election developments and the Likud victory. Can you brief us on the meeting?

['Urayqat] In fact there was no meeting worth mentioning. No contacts were held with the new government except the contacts with Mahmud 'Abbas, suggesting that as soon as the Israeli Government is formed, negotiations will resume between the two sides.

[Salim] As you are aware, the Likud victory caused apprehension and consternation in the Palestinian and Arab sides. A call for an Arab summit was issued. In your opinion, will the Israeli side continue to adhere to its firm principles, given that its programs contain several no's in this regard? How do you assess the situation, what does your political intuition tell you?

['Urayqat] I believe the worry is exaggerated. When we signed a peace agreement, we signed with the government of Israel, not with this or that party. Today, the democratic choice of the Israelis does not give the new government the power to dissociate itself from what Israel has signed. So far, we are in the transitional phase. The new government's options are limited. Either it continues to implement what was agreed on and all the consequences of the transitional phase, entering the final status negotiations forthwith and without hesitation, or bear responsibility for the collapse of the peace process. In politics there is no stagnation. Either the peace process moves forward as was agreed or it will collapse. Therefore, we must say that the need for peace is not only a Palestinian one but an Israeli, Arab, regional, continental, and international need.

Therefore, as president 'Arafat announced, by voicing commitment to the peace process and what was agreed on, the Palestinian side has placed the ball entirely in the Israeli court. Therefore, we realize perfectly that the Likud election platform has nothing to do with peace. Netanyahu must understand that it is either peace or settlements. He cannot have both. He cannot define the fate of Jerusalem in election platforms. Jerusalem's fate will be decided in negotiations. This is not an internal Israeli problem. [passage omitted]

[Salim] There have been calls on the Israeli side for holding a Madrid II conference. How do you react to this?

['Urayqat] If this means putting a new frame of reference outside Resolutions 242 and 338, outside the land-for-peace formula, then we reject this outright. Frames of reference for the peace process were defined, agreements were signed based on these frames of reference. The Israeli side and Mr. Netanyahu must realize that the only genuine formula for peace is the land-for-peace principle; that is, returning the land occupied in 1967, including holy Jerusalem, in exchange for peace. Any other formulas Netanyahu seeks, such as his belief that he can realize peace and continue settlements and keep Jerusalem at the same time are really illusions that will founder on the hard rock of reality when Netanyahu faces the practical politics outside the limelight and sensationalism of election platforms. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Quray'—Israeli Government Program Will 'Never Lead to Peace'

JN1006200396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the Monday Meeting program a short while ago following the announcement of the broad lines of the program of the upcoming Israeli Government, Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Quray' said that the program would never lead to peace because it does not recognize the inalienable national Palestinian rights, including the right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of a Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Referring to the Israeli Government going back on the accords signed with the PLO, Quray' stressed the need to implement all outstanding issues stipulated in the Oslo accords, including the opening of a safe crossing, withdrawal from Hebron, and releasing all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

Ahmad Quray' asserted that the Palestinian side was ready to continue the final-status negotiations with the new Israeli Government led by Binyamin Netanyahu, pointing out that the National Authority and the PLO do not negotiate with a party but with any Israeli Government that is elected by the Israelis.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Negotiator Views Prospects for Peace With Netanyahu

AU1106094196 Munich FOCUS in German 10 Jun 96 p 210

[Interview with PLO chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th by Nathan Gardels; place and date not given: "Our Patience Will Not Last Forever"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gardels] During the election campaign, Netanyahu refused to make Israel's security dependent on 'Arafat. Does he want to seek peace with the other Arab neighbors but without the Palestinians?

[Sha'th] I do not believe Netanyahu will leave the peace process to others. If the world allows it, he will delay the negotiations until he creates new facts with more settlements.

[Gardels] Will the United States allow that?

[Sha'th] In a letter to 'Arafat, U.S. President Bill Clinton wrote that the United States would ensure that the agreements are honored. The peace process is too important for the United States, thus it will not watch it silently collapse.

[Gardels] Netanyahu depends on certain financiers.

[Sha'th] The U.S. investment bank Merril Lynch has announced that it will suspend investment in Israel until it is clear what will become of the peace process. Peace has greatly enhanced Israel's reputation and, with the exception of the four terrorist attacks, has brought other advantages: an end to the state of war, the normalization of relations with most Arab states, and a threefold increase in per capita income. Why should one give up all this out of reactionary nostalgia?

[Gardels] Netanyahu has declared the Jerusalem issue settled....

[Sha'th] By making that statement, he is violating the agreements. We can only wait and see how Netanyahu will behave in practice.

[Gardels] 'Arafat said the new prime minister's policy can be judged by how fast the withdrawal from Hebron proceeds.

[Sha'th] It will happen earlier, during the formation of the cabinet, for instance. What posts will Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan receive? (Sharon, Israeli war hero, propagates the expansion of Jewish settlements; Rafael Eitan, a former general, is against territorial concessions to the Palestinians — editor) How fast will Israel return to the negotiating table? What will become of the long list of agreements that Peres has not yet implemented.

for example, the failed handover of Hebron. We will remain steadfast on all these issues.

[Gardels] Might the hesitant implementation of the Oslo Treaties and the preservation of Hebron's current status revive the Intifadah?

[Sha'th] People not only want a resumption of the peace talks; they want open borders, which Peres closed. If it does not happen in the near future, people might again long for the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fighters. Nobody has put up with so much in the past few months as the Palestinians. Our patience will not last forever. The ball is now in Netanyahu's court. We must proceed from the premise that he will act like a prime minister of Israel, not like a Likud leader.

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Criticize Netanyahu Government Program

JN1106071296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] National Authority [NA] officials and members of the Legislative Council were unanimous that the outlines of the program of the next Israeli Government, led by Binyamin Netanyahu, would increase tension and expose the ongoing Middle East peace process to danger. They were also unanimous in their call to consolidate the national and pan-Arab stand to face current developments.

In this regard, Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Quray' stressed that the outlines of the program of the Netanyahu government will never lead to peace in the Middle East because the program does not recognize national Palestinian rights, represented by the rights to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Sa'ib 'Urayqat, NA minister and member of the Legislative Council, said the program blatantly interferes in Palestinian affairs. He added that the NA made peace with the Israeli Government, not with a specific party.

'Azzam al-Ahmad, NA minister and member of the Legislative Council, said the outlines of the Likud program reject peace and call for escalating the situation. Al-Ahmad called for unifying Palestinian and Arab ranks to face such dangers.

In other reactions to the Likud program, Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, member of the Legislative Council, called on Arab countries to stop normalization with Israel and to link development in Arab-Israeli relations with progress in the peace process.

Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, leader of the Arab Movement for Change inside the Green Line, said the outlines of the new Israeli Government's program are very bad signs. In a statement to our radio, al-Tibi said: If the Israeli Government adopts these lines, it will be considered an assassination of the Oslo accord and will empty the accord of its content. He added that the Likud is not interested in the peace process; it is only interested in political maneuvering. He said that the Likud will continue talks with the Palestinian side as long as possible.

The broad lines of the Netanyahu government's program includes rejection of a Palestinian state, solving the Palestinian issue on the basis of self-rule, and rejecting any solution to the issue of occupied Jerusalem. The program, which Netanyahu will present to the Knesset next week, asserts what Likud terms the need to deepen peace with Jordan and Egypt, to continue talks with Syria, reject withdrawal from the Golan, and develop relations with Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, and Oman.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Official—'Either Peace or Confrontation'

TA1006172096 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 8 Jun 96 pp 1, 15

[Report by Sa'idah Hamad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Jerusalem, QUDS PRESS — A prominent Palestinian negotiator has announced that the Palestinians will not adjust to the basic guidelines of Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's government, which were unveiled yesterday in Israel. The guidelines contain three main "no's": no to an independent Palestinian state, no to the division of Jerusalem, and no to concessions in the Golan Heights. He pointed out that this policy contradicts the Declaration of Principles signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

Commenting on the "no's" included in the draft program of the upcoming Israeli Government, Hasan 'Asfur, one of?the Oslo agreement's architects, said: "It would be better if Netanyahu redrafts his government's program on one basis; namely, no to the peace process and yes to the policy of war. In this way, Netanyahu will spare himself and the entire world the trouble of dealing with his government's no's."

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, 'Asfur added: "The Palestinians are ready to negotiate on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and on the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." He stressed that the Palestinian side will not be tolerant toward the Israeli Government's announced program.

'Asfur accused Netanyahu of having "an inflated ego." He said: "I believe that he is still dazzled by the exhilaration of assuming power." He stressed that Netanyahu "chose to start by creating a climate of provocation and incitement, whereas we were hoping that he would embark on fostering a climate that contributes to the resumption of the negotiating process."

'Asfur stressed that Netanyahu has an inflated ego that has no bounds, but he will collide with a political rock to which he was not exposed before because he has not been a political leader in the past. 'Asfur called on the Israeli prime minister-elect to reeducate himself and read the Declaration of Principles again.

He said: "The agreement's articles are very clear and provide for the recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and the achievement of a historic reconciliation between the two sides." He added: "We say to Netanyahu: Either peace or confrontation." 'Asfur said that Netanyahu will learn things about the Palestinian people that he is not aware of, as he resided abroad for a long time. He was hinting about the intifadah, during which Netanyahu occupied diplomatic posts abroad.

The Palestinian negotiator believes that Netanyahu and the Likud Party are seeking to return to the pre-Madrid conference phase in order to avoid proceeding on the Palestinian negotiating track. He said: "This is something rejected and not subject to discussion."

'Asfur stated that the Palestinian stance on Jewish settlements is firm and is epitomized by the necessity to evacuate the settlements completely. He said: "Any bargaining over land for the purpose of expanding settlement activity will be strongly resisted by the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the Palestinian people."

Palestinian Affairs: Official Warns Israel Against Ignoring Agreements

JN1006163596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a press statement today, Minister Furayh Abu-Middayn said that the lack of real progress in the peace negotiations will lead to more acts of violence and will create tension in the region.

Abu-Middayn also warned the Israeli Government against ignoring the agreements signed with the [Palestinian] National Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, European Troika Discuss Developments, Likud Victory

JN1006203796 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received the European Troika delegation today. Discussions dealt with the Palestinian people's difficult economic conditions under the continuing Israeli closure. The latest peace developments were also reviewed in light of the Israeli election results and Likud Chairman Netanyahu's victory.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas Believes Likud Will Continue Peace Process

TA1106095396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Jun 96 p A1

[Report on interview with PLO's Mahmud 'Abbas by Yosef Elgazi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The result of the Israeli elections does not arouse in me any fears for the continuation of the peace process. In my view, Israel's new leaders are well aware of the risks involved in distancing themselves from the peace process. Any distancing from the process could bring us back to the war situation that existed here before the signing of the agreement of principles in September 1993," Mahmud 'Abbas [Abu-Mazin], a senior member of the Palestinian leadership, said in an interview to HA'ARETZ.

He added that "the Palestinians hope that the declarations issued by the Likud in their campaigning will not constitute the basis for government policy, especially on the Palestinian issue." "We are awaiting the start of the talks with representatives of the Likud government so as to find out in practice if there is a reality that will enable the continuation of the peace process. If we find that such a reality does not exist, then it will be a great disappointment for the Palestinian people, the people of Israel, and peoples of the region and the world."

[Elgazi] What is your impression of the remarks you heard from representatives of Binyamin Netanyahu the day after his election?

"From what I heard from Dr. Dore Gold I understood that Netanyahu and his people are committed to the peace process and that they have faith in the process. I understood that Netanyahu and his people urge us not to refer to the declarations being made here and there but that are not issued by Netanyahu himself or his official representatives. We were also told that immediately after the establishment of the new government and the appointment of its negotiating team, they are ready to start talks between Israel and the Palestinians. From our point of view these are reassuring remarks, and we hope that the future will confirm that." Abu-Mazin said that the issue of the Hebron evacuation did not come up in his talks.

[Elgazi] What message would you want to send to the Israeli people?

"I would say to the people of Israel that they chose this government and that it is their full right to choose any government they wish. We respect their wish, their choice, and their position on domestic issues.

"If the people of Israel chose the Likud to lead their government, we respect that choice and we will cooperate with the Likud government with all the respect, esteem, and openness called for. The Likud will find us reliable, just as Labor did in its contacts with us and in our joint labors."

[Elgazi] Are you personally disappointed by the fact that Shim'on Peres was not elected prime minister?

"I have had a long relationship with Peres. What we did together was enormous. If at times we were angry at each other, we always knew that Shim'on Peres is one of the knights of peace. Nobody can take that away from him. From that point of view, the fact that Peres was not reelected is painful to me and to many Palestinians."

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Demands Abu-Marzuq's Whereabouts 'Immediately'

MM1006145396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Jun 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Hamas Holds Washington Fully Responsible for Abu-Marzuq's Life"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) issued a statement yesterday, of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy, urging the U.S. authorities to reveal the whereabouts of the head of the movement's Political Bureau, who is being held in a U.S. prison. It held the U.S. Administration "fully responsible for Dr. Abu-Marzuq's life."

Hamas said in the statement that Dr. Abu-Marzuq's family "were surprised when the federal prison's management told them that Dr. Abu-Marzuq was not in his cell and that he was probably in court. But Abu-Marzuq's lawyers denied this claim. As a result, the prison management was compelled to admit that Abu-Marzuq had been moved to hospital because of the deterioration in his health. However, the management declined to name the hospital. Abu-Marzuq's family said that his lawyers protested the decision to move him from the prison without their knowledge. So the prison management had to hint at the possibility of arranging for Dr. Abu-Marzuq to talk to his lawyers."

Hamas denounced the "unjust and inhumane" measures taken by both the prison management and the U.S. judiciary against Dr. Abu-Marzuq. It urged the U.S. Administration to "immediately reveal Dr. Abu-Marzuq's whereabouts if the prison management does not confirm that he is in hospital or in court." The movement also demanded that his family and lawyers be allowed to visit and meet with him, and that all means of care be provided to Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, "whose health is deteriorating as a result of the bad health care offered by the prison management."

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Comments on Arab Summit, Israel's Peace Stance

NC1006193296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1555 GMT 10 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo 10 June (MENA)—The talks between President Husni Mubarak and Sultan of Oman Qabus Bin-Sa'id will begin on Tuesday, 11 June. This came in a statement by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today, who added that the two leaders will discuss the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo and the distinguished bilateral relations as well as the Arab, regional, and international issues of common interest.

On the possibility of the Arab League adopting President Mubarak's initiative for Arab reconciliation separately from the Arab summit's statement and as a policy and basis for joint Arab action, Musa said everything is under study now to prepare the papers and agenda for the Arab summit. He said this issue will be discussed by the foreign ministers during a preparatory meeting before the Arab summit.

On the participation of Sudan in the Arab summit, 'Amr Musa said an invitation will be extended to Sudan to attend the summit. He pointed to the possibility of holding bilateral meetings on the summit's sidelines.

Regarding the participation of Somalia in the expected summit, 'Amr Musa said: Regrettably, Somalia is in a state where we do not know who might represent it, though we are studying a formula that would let Somalia attend. He added that Somalia has the right to attend.

Answering a question on the possibility of Iraq's foreign minister attending, Musa said that the Iraqi issue is postponed for the time being.

Regarding the number of countries that have agreed to attend the Arab summit, Musa replied: I believe that 20 Arab states have agreed to attend the summit. On the possibility of considering the summit an Arab attempt to formulate a united stand before the visit by the Israeli prime minister-elect to Washington, and if it could be considered as an action and not a reaction, Musa said: It is an action and a reaction at the same time and it is an Arab move to boost the peace process and not oppose it. He added: The summit puts emphasis on the same foundations the peace process has been built on since the beginning—namely, land-for-peace, rights in return for rights, commitment for commitment, and security for everyone.

In his statements which were made at the Presidential Palace after the end of the official reception accorded Sultan Qabus, Musa said: The principle of land-for-peace is the formula that will produce a just peace that takes into consideration the security of the Arab states and Israel, the rights of the Arabs and Israel, the commitment of Israel and the Arabs, the land from Israel and peace for everybody. He added that this is the foundation that we will talk about because the peace process is not platonic but one that requires measures and actions. This is what we are working to achieve, he added.

Musa denied that the summit's timing was chosen to coincide with Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington.

On the remark in Israel describing the Damascus summit as muscle flexing, 'Amr Musa said: The times that Israel had flexed its muscles are innumerable. He added: There is no problem if the issue is muscle flexing. However, the issue is not one of muscle flexing, rather it is how to adopt a sound stand and keep everything concerning the peace process under control. Musa added: On the other hand, we are registering our stance. We all feel concerned about the peace process, not about the Israeli government.

Musa said: We are interested in peace and the region's future. We are concerned about the situation in general in light of the statements about peace, its foundations, and its future. He added: We are also working towards peace and will support it according to the principles of the Madrid Conference, particularly the land-for-peace principle.

Asked if it is strange that the Israeli election is the reason for the Arab get-together and for our convening a summit six years after the last Arab summit, Musa said: The Israeli elections did not bring the Arabs together; what brought them together is their feeling and belief in the need to meet, gather, and close ranks.

Egypt: Musa's U.S. Visit Postponed Due to Arab Summit Preparations

NC1006121596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1155 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Jun (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said his visit to the United States scheduled for 12 June has been postponed in view of developments in the region and the Arab summit in Cairo between 21 and 23 June.

Today, Musa said the decision was made to postpone the trip as he will be busy with preparations for the summit and his contacts in this regard.

Egypt: Musa Receives Phone Call From Russian Foreign Minister

NC1006140396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1255 GMT 10 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo 10 June (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa received a telephone call from Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov today.

'Amr Musa stated that, during the call, they exchanged views on the latest developments in the Middle East. He added that this call comes in the context of diplomatic efforts and contacts that Egypt is making to preserve and boost the peace process in the Middle East.

Egypt: Al-Baz Says Summit Seeks Comprehensive Arab Reconciliation

NC1006185596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1755 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Jun (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stressed that the Arab summit seeks to achieve a genuine and comprehensive Arab reconciliation. The summit is not a reaction to an emergency situation, he said.

Speaking to a number of journalists at the Interior Ministry today, al-Baz said the summit is also aimed at strengthening full cooperation among the Arab countries. He stressed that Egypt has a scientific and realistic vision about the future and that it plays a vital regional and international role. He stressed the need to close Arab ranks to consolidate common Arab cooperation.

On Iraq, Dr. al-Baz pointed out the need to end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

On Israel's position on the peace process following Netanyahu's victory in the Israeli elections, Dr. al-Baz said Netanyahu's victory is not cause for alarm. He emphasized that neither Israel nor any other country can individually determine the future of the region. We are eagerly awaiting the position the Israeli Government will take on the peace process, he said.

On Egypt's role in the next stage, al-Baz said: We must have a scientific and realistic vision in the next stage. For us to play an influential role abroad in the future, our domestic structure must be strong and cohesive.

He noted the importance of major economic development in building a strong domestic structure in Egypt. He said there is need for a complete reform of the educational system, and that attention must be given to the human resources in the country to turn them into a positive factor.

He said the government welcomes political reforms in every area, and the door is open for such reforms to develop Egypt.

Egypt: Chinese Defense Minister Arrives in Cairo

NC1006185896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 10 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 June (MENA)—General Chi Haotian, Chinese national defense minister, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and member of the State Council, arrived in Cairo this afternoon on a visit of several days to Egypt.

The visit comes at the invitation of Field Marshal Husayn Tantawi, commander in chief of the Armed Forces and minister of defense and war production, to conduct talks on ways to boost bilateral military cooperation. The Chinese official was received by Field Marshal Tantawi and the Chinese ambassador in Cairo.

Egypt: Chinese Defense Minister Comments After Meeting Mubarak

NC1106111096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0910 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)— Chinese Defense Minister General Chi Hoatian has affirmed that China supports the peace process in the Middle East and hopes Arabs will reunite and restore their solidarity.

Speaking after his meeting with President Husni Mubarak today, Chi Hoatian said that Egypt and China have things in common and that both definitely want to develop the ties of friendship and cooperation between them.

He added that he conveyed to President Mubarak the greetings of the Chinese president and prime minister.

He also expressed his pleasure at the meeting with President Mubarak, pointing out that they exchanged views on ties of cooperation between the two countries and their armies.

Egypt: Leader of 'Afghan Arabs' Reportedly Killed

LD1106111396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jun 96 p 7

[Report by Muhammad Salah: "Cairo: Leader of 'Afghan Arabs' Killed in African State"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — Grief yesterday dominated Egyptian religious groups following the announcement of the death of the leader of the "Afghan

Arabs," 'Ali al-Rashidi, known as Abu-'Ubaydah al-Banshiri. He was on board a ship which sank a few days ago. Informed Egyptian sources said that the incident occurred in an African state in which al-Rashidi had resided since he left Afghanistan some three years ago. The sources said that al-Rashidi was Usamah Bin-Ladin's [Saudi businessman accused of financing terrorism] right arm, and that al-Rashidi worked with Bin-Ladin for a long time in Afghanistan and supervised the camps of the "base" set up by Bin-Ladin to train Arab mujahidin. The sources said that al-Rashidi was behind the links established between Bin-Ladin and the various Egyptian religious groups, and that he had been working to establish an Arab Islamic army, but the end of the Afghan war and the Pakistan Government's decision to move against the "Afghan Arabs" residing illegally on its territory prevented that from happening.

The sources said that al-Rashidi exploited his presence in the African state in question to help Egyptian, Arab, and African Islamists in several African states. The sources said that he commanded a group of them in the fight against U.S. forces in Somalia, and he also participated in operations carried out by Islamists in Eritrea, Ogaden, Burma, Kashmir, Tajikstan, Chechnya, Bosnia, and Libya. He worked as a policeman in the seventies, but the interior minister dismissed him in 1981 following his arrest in connection with the assassination of the late President Anwar al-Sadat. He spent three years in prison and was arrested more than once after his release before leaving for Afghanistan in 1986. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Writer Warns of Cooperation With Israel

NC1106114296 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 6 Jun 96 p 3

[From the "Free Opinion" column by Ahmad Abu-al-Fath: "Israeli Security Again"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel's security was the pivot on which the Israeli elections revolved. Defending what he termed Israel's security, Shim'on Peres perpetrated all the crimes that we know so well against the Palestinians and carried out mass killings in Lebanon. Peres was excessively brutal, shielding himself behind Clinton and the U.S. military arsenal, its financial prowess, and global authority. He concluded an accursed agreement with Turkey and some Arab countries, which are very far from Israel, like Oman, Qatar, Mauritania, and Tunisia, recognized Israel and received with open arms Peres and his aides despite their ugly crimes. Egypt opened its doors wide, allowing Israel to infiltrate its agriculture and other spheres of activity and permitting it to influence the minds of Egypt's young men, senior employees, and the country's richest businessmen. Despite all this, the Israeli people did not judge that he had done all he could to safeguard Israel's security.

Although Israel won many new investments as a consequence of the Oslo agreement, most Israelis denied Peres election victory because they believed he had not done enough in the security sphere.

Peres' downfall, despite all the U.S. aid and everything Clinton did to help him, should be a very good but stern lesson to those who allow themselves to become agents of the United States and sacrifice their countries' interests for the sake of the whims of the United States and its President.

Authority is for God only. Only he must be worshipped, not the United States or Israel. No one should seek wealth by seeking Israel's pleasure at the expense of his homeland's and nation's good. God is the supporter and the giver of livelihoods. It is he, may he be praised and exalted, who gives us health, wealth, and peace of mind. Will we learn?

The Israelis elected Binyamin Netanyahu as prime minister because he is fanatical and willing to exercise the most extreme forms of violence to defend what is termed "Israel's security." Israel's security is not limited to its borders, but extends to protect every Israeli anywhere.

Our government's newspapers have published reports about a series of joint projects carried out by the Egyptian Government together with the Israeli Government and Israeli investors. Some of these projects are huge, such as the natural gas project on Egypt's northern coast.

Because they are joint projects it is only to be expected that both Egyptians and Israelis will operate them. Is there no danger in this? Is it not likely that the Egyptians and Israelis will disagree and even quarrel? Is it not possible that Egyptian workers will become irritated by some Israeli engineer's arrogance and decide to teach him some manners either by beating him up or directing wounding insults at him?

Will Netanyahu remain silent if an attack is carried out against an Israeli national, when he, Netanyahu, was specifically elected to safeguard Israel's security? What will happen to this security if an Israeli is beaten up in an Egyptian factory, particularly as any quarrel can unleash the latent and repressed hatred the Egyptians feel, turning a quarrel from a simple beating into a sweeping wave of hate for all the Israelis working on the project? Will Netanyahu tolerate this or will he move to protect his men's security?

How will he act? Will he restrict himself to blaming the Egyptian Government and issuing a strongly worded warning? If things get serious and the Egyptians' anger grows such that they turn the tables over the heads of any Israeli they see, what method will Netanyahu use? Will his method of safeguarding the Israelis' security be less fierce than that of Peres, who launched a 17-day war in retaliation for the death of one Israeli soldier during which he killed hundreds of people, drove hundreds of thousands from their homes, and destroyed the public amenities of their towns and villages?

Netanyahu cannot silently tolerate any quarrel in which Israelis working in Egypt are injured. He cannot accept revenge less than that of Peres, especially as he knows that the anger of the majority of Israelis was not sufficiently assuaged by what Peres did in Lebanon.

The Egyptian Government is proceeding with the normalization process without consulting the people and consequently is driving the homeland and the citizens toward unforeseeable danger. The Egyptians were very angry at what Peres did. How will they feel if battles erupt between Egyptian and Israeli nationals? Their feelings will be aroused and this is dangerous. Can the government, no matter how alert it is, prevent one Egyptian citizen or group of Egyptians from attacking an Israeli national?

Why does the government not avoid this partnership at a time when the Egyptians' hearts are full of hate for everything Israeli? Does the popular proverb not say: "Close the door from which the wind comes?"

Does Egypt really need Israel's partnership? Is it not a great pity to allow Israel to share with us our God-given natural gas? Why Israel? Why give an opportunity for trouble to arise? Is the government allowing Israel to be a partner in its biggest projects under U.S. pressure? If not, what is the reason?

Peace is facing countless obstacles. The Israelis did not elect Netanyahu so that he would evacuate the Golan Heights or give the Arabs their rights in Jerusalem. Netanyahu was brought to power because he is a hardliner who will reject Arab rights and exercise the ugliest forms of cruelty against the Arabs who resist him. Netanyahu's hardline stance, his rejection of Arab rights, and the criminal oppression he will carry out will heighten Egyptian hatred for the Israelis. This is why it is the government's duty to close the doors on the Israelis, particularly on issues connected with the national economy.

[Prime Minister] Dr. al-Janzuri is seeking, by every possible means, to revive the national economy, but others are placing obstacles in the path of major and serious investors.

It is no secret that Egyptian investors have very successfully manufactured furniture, crystal products, carpets, and aluminum and steel household utensils. I visited a major Geneva store selling cutlery and stainless steel and aluminum kitchen utensils. When the store owner noticed my interest in his wares, he approached and asked about my nationality. When I told him, he informed me that the utensils I was admiring were Egyptian made. He added: There is much demand for them and I hope Monsieur Zahran will increase our share of his products.

This was not the first time I saw Zahran's products in Switzerland. Years ago I wrote about a carpet merchant who praised Egyptian carpets and said there is much demand for them. In Paris store owners do not want to admit that their prized furniture is imported from Egypt and is the work of the great artist Husayn al-Atrabi. These earnest industrialists bring honor to Egypt abroad and must be accorded all the help and encouragement they need. All the obstacles must be removed from the path of national industries.

But there are in Egypt people in senior posts who are unhappy with the success of their countrymen and secretively create obstacles to cause trouble for those successful people. Oh how much I hope Dr. al-Janzuri will instruct minister counselor Tal'at Hammad to pursue all those who hinder serious investments. In this way he can save Egypt from the enemies of success just as he succeeded in destroying the mafia insurance gangs.

Egypt's security makes it necessary to close every door on the Israelis. There is no need to invite trouble.

Morocco

Morocco: King Hassan 'Might Not Attend' Cairo Summit

MM1006104496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Exclusive to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Hassan II Might Not Attend Summit Personally"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rabat, Cairo, occupied Jerusalem, news agencies — The first obstacle to the Cairo Arab summit emerged yesterday. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from well-informed sources that King Hassan II of Morocco may not attend the summit personally. However, Morocco will send an official delegation to attend the conference and comply with its resolutions, since the level of representation will not affect Morocco's compliance with a collective

Arab stand and any resolutions to be adopted by the summit on basic Arab issues.

It is not known yet why the Moroccan monarch might not be able to attend the summit. However, there are interpretations to the effect that the main reason is the way the date and the venue of the summit were announced without consulting with major powers in the Arab world such as Morocco. Morocco has been in charge of the peace file and issue since the Arab summits began in the mid-sixties, and it has been shouldering the burdens of this task since. [passage omitted]

Morocco: MAP Reports on Clashes in Tangiers, Stike Negotiations

LD0706134296 Rabat MAP in English
1323 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, June 7 (MAP) — The Moroccan Government on Thursday [6 June] announced that the ministerial commission in charge of social dialogue with socio-economic partners will meet next Monday to define the next steps of these negotiations.

A communique issued after the cabinet weekly meeting reiterated "the government's readiness to carry on contacts with the labor unions and the employers with the aim to find adequate solutions to the workers' claims as part of a constructive, responsible and regular dialogue".

The resumption of this dialogue comes on the morrow of last Wednesday's 24 hour "preventive" general strike, called for by two major labor unions in Morocco, the "Confederation Democratique du Travail" (CDT) [Democratic Labor Confederation] and the "Union Generale des Travailleurs du Maroc" (UGTM) [General Union of Moroccan Workers] both of them close to the opposition.

The nation-wide strike which, according to the two labor unions, was followed by nearly 90 per cent of the workers from the private and public sectors (officially from 10 to 68 per cent according to sectors), came in protest against "the lack of a serious and responsible dialogue" with the government.

The latter on Monday brought all labor unions and the employers around the table in attempt to start negotiations on the worker's claims. However, the meeting cut short after the withdrawal of the CDT and UGTM in protest against the government's refusal to meet immediately their demands.

The general strike, the third in the past six years, was held in calm at the exception of the city of Tangiers where hundreds of people took to the street setting ablaze a bank and storming another.

According to an official communique released on Thursday, 97 "trouble-makers, among whom 13 minors have been arrested in connection with these incidents that took place in the Beni Makada poor area of the city.

The same source said "uncontrolled youngsters and idle persons among whom several ex-convicts, have seized the opportunity of this protest movement to foment troubles and commit vandalism acts".

12 policemen, 13 demonstrators and 3 passers-by were injured during the clashes between security forces and the trouble-makers.

Despite this incident, the labor unions, the opposition parties, the media as well as government officials expressed satisfaction at the "responsible and mature behavior" of both the workers and the authorities in dealing with this nation-wide protest movement.

Sudan

Sudan: Vice President Calls UN Resolutions Unfair

EA1006202596 Khartoum SUNA in English
1015 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, 9 June (SUNA) — Vice President Major General George Kongor [Arop] described the Security Council resolutions against the Sudan as "unfair", urging the citizens to overstep the resolutions by redoubling efforts to achieve high production.

Speaking to a huge audience at al-Managil, Sunday [9 June] Kongor said the government was resolved to make further power transfer to popular leaderships with objective of boosting development process.

Kongor and accompanying delegation are currently visiting al- Jazirah state.

GCC: Chiefs of Staff Condemn 'Conspiracy' Against Bahrain

JN1006193696 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1748 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 10 Jun (WAKH)—Their excellencies the chiefs of staff of the armies of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states concluded two working sessions at the Royal Meridian Hotel this afternoon under Staff Lieutenant General Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Ahmad Al Khalifah, minister of defense and deputy commander in chief, in the presence of the GCC chiefs of staff as well as His Highness Shaykh Salman Bin-Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, under secretary of the Defense Ministry; Jamil al-Hujaylan, secretary general of the GCC; and Staff Major General Falih al-Shatti, assistant secretary general for military affairs.

The minister of defense and deputy commander in chief made a statement in which he lauded the honorable fraternal positions of all brothers in the GCC states—positions that stem from the spirit of national unity which is based on firm historic constants, for their total solidarity with their brothers in Bahrain, for expressing their concern over the attempts to undermine Bahrain's stability and encroach upon its sovereignty and legitimate rule, and for denouncing the flagrant interference in Bahrain's internal affairs and supporting the measures Bahrain has taken to safeguard its security and stability.

The defense minister pointed out that the conspiracies against Bahrain endanger the entire region and constitute a very serious turning point. He added that the flagrant interference in the affairs of the GCC states and the attempts to undermine their stability and security require pooling the GCC efforts in order to confront these conspiracies and take a unified Arab position.

The GCC secretary general also made a statement. He said that such a meeting aims to [word indistinct] collective defense decisions for military cooperation with which the chiefs of staff are entrusted.

He added that the attendees reviewed military issues on which the Supreme Council made decisions. These are issues of a military nature and aim to enhance military cooperation [words indistinct].

He asserted that the chiefs of staff expressed their denunciation and that of their countries of the [words indistinct] conspiracy which targeted Bahrain's security, [word indistinct], sovereignty, and independence. He added that at the same time they stressed their countries' support for Bahrain regarding all that is related to its security and stability.

He continued: This support is natural because it is in harmony with the spirit of solidarity characterizing the GCC states which consider the GCC's security an indivisible whole.

He pointed out that the GCC is not a council of war, but is rather a cooperative council dominated by fraternity. He added that the GCC states seek only to establish strong and sincere relations with the neighboring states [words indistinct]. He added: Exactly like other GCC states, Bahrain [words indistinct] as well as noninterference in others' affairs and nonacceptance of interference in its internal affairs. This right was recognized by the international laws, norms, and charters.

He also asserted that as far as their relations with Iran or other countries are concerned, the GCC states only hope that these relations will be based on confidence and that each side will care for its own affairs and will not interfere in the affairs of others.

He added that what was revealed regarding the recent events in Bahrain is denounced and unacceptable and is a serious precedent that cannot be condoned or approved. It is in the interest of Iran and other states in the region to establish relations [?based on] mutual confidence and noninterference in others' internal affairs, he said.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Amir Accepts Mubarak Summit Invitation

JN0906140196 (Internet) AL-AYYAM WWW in Arabic 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the country, received a telephone call from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak last night. The Egyptian president invited his highness the amir to attend the Arab summit conference scheduled to be held in Cairo on 21-23 June.

His highness the amir accepted the invitation. He thanked President Muhammad Husni Mubarak for his great efforts to unify the Arab ranks and bolster solidarity among Arab countries. He praised Egypt's role and stand on the Arab and international causes.

Bahrain: Opposition Leader's Son Says No Link With Overthrow Bid

NC0706151096 Paris AFP in English 1452 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, June 7 (AFP)—The son of Bahrain's main Shiite opposition leader, Shaykh 'Abd-al Amir al-Jamri, denied Friday [7 June] that his father was linked to an alleged Iranian-backed plot to overthrow the government in Manama.

Mansur al-Jamri, exiled in Britain, said his father, a 56-year-old cleric imprisoned in Bahrain, was "not linked to any attempt to overthrow the regime, nor any armed group or foreign country," according to a statement received by AFP in Nicosia.

"We call on the government to stop this comedy, which will have only one result and that is to stir up anger in the streets of Bahrain and the people's determination to see the parliament re-established," said al-Jamri, a member of the exiled Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM).

Bahraini state television on Wednesday aired the confessions of six Shiite Muslim militants accused of trying to overthrow their government with the help of Iran.

The militants said they belonged to an Iranian-backed group called Hizballah-Bahrain and charged that Shaykh al-Jamri, who has been in prison since January, headed it.

"We categorically deny this attempt to unjustly accuse the leaders who have sincerely worked to end the political crisis in Bahrain, and we believe that the only solution is to respect the constitutional rights of the citizens," al-Jamri added in his statement.

Since December 1994 Bahrain has been hit by anti-government unrest led by Shiite Moslems demanding a restoration of the parliament that was suspended in 1975 by the Sunni Muslim-led authorities.

At least 22 people have been killed and many others injured in the violence which has included explosions of home-made bombs, firebombings, stabbings and beatings.

Bahrain: UK-Based Opposition Group Says Confessions 'Preposterous'

LD0706122396 Tehran IRNA in English
1149 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 7, IRNA — The alleged 'confessions' of a plot to overthrow Bahrain's ruling al-Khalifa family were preposterous and went as far as discrediting even circles close to the government, the Bahrain Freedom Movement said Friday [7 June].

The text read by the so-called 'conspirators' was so absurd as to try to show the involvement of all Shia religious figures, and used the most incriminating language as to suggest that it was written by foreign advisors to the government, it said.

The opposition group saw similarities to five previously alleged 'coup attempts' in 1975, 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1988, in which the British head of Bahrain's security, Ian Henderson, used in each case to unleash campaigns of terror.

It suggested that the latest conspiracy case should be seen in context with the failure by the minority government to stem peaceful demands for constitutional reforms by the Shia majority in the past 18 months, when the regime has not hesitated to resort to lethal methods.

When the ruling family realised that it lost the political war against the people of Bahrain, it produced its "traditional ploy to justify its repression and human rights violations," the Bahrain freedom movement said.

With regard to attempts to involve two opposition figures in London and the existence of 'Hezbollah of Bahrain,' both strongly denied the allegations or ever hearing or being approached by anyone claiming to represent such a group.

The two named, Dr. Mansur al-Jamri and Dr. Sa'd al-Shebabi, have worked for the last 14 years with the Bahrain Freedom Movement, which is made up mostly of professionals and intellectuals, committed to peaceful constitutional change. They have campaigned openly, saying that they do not feel the need to work clandestinely, having always advocated peaceful methods and being opposed to advocating, assisting or encouraging any form of violence.

Bahrain: Hizballah Said To Smuggle Abandoned Iraqi Army Weapons

NC1006102296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0915 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 10 Jun (MENA)—The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-ANBA' reported today that Kuwaiti Hizballah bought weapons left by the Iraqi Army when it fled the country and then transferred them to Hizballah Bahrain.

The paper added that relatively heavy weapons were smuggled to Bahrain by sea by a Kuwaiti who usually sells various types of weapons outside Kuwait's territorial water.

The paper said instructions issued by the Iranian authorities to Hizballah Bahrain included the implementation of a plan to smuggle weapons into the country over a long period so that the Bahraini authorities would be unable to uncover the whole operation if one shipment was caught. The instructions also called for distributing the weapons to various hideouts.

Last week Bahrain's security forces arrested five Bahraini nationals who had arrived from Kuwait carrying concealed weapons. Customs officials discovered the weapons.

Bahrain: Foreign Minister Says Good Relations Sought With Iran

NC1006105096 Paris AFP in English 1012 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, June 10 (AFP)—Bahrain wants good relations with Iran and is confident the Islamic republic will end its alleged efforts to destabilise the government in Manama, the Bahraini foreign minister said Monday [10 June].

"We hope to have good relations with Iran, and only want our neighbour to know that Islam calls for peace," Shaykh Muhammad Bin Mubarak told the Kuwaiti daily AL-SIYASAH.

"I believe that everything now is finished, and that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) understood our message and reacted appropriately," the minister said.

The GCC states — which alongside Bahrain include Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — rallied to the support of Bahrain following its charge last week that Iran was behind a foiled plot to overthrow the government.

He said all the evidence gathered over two years pointed toward Iranian involvement and was consistent with Tehran's past record.

"Iran has long been accustomed to conspiracies and then denies them. That is the Iranian style and approach which was also clear in Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia," he said.

Iran has denied any involvement in the unrest in Bahrain.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Abbas Maleki said Monday his country was ready to send a delegation to Manama to investigate the Bahraini charges. Tehran has also offered to mediate between the government and opposition.

Since December 1994, Bahrain has faced a wave of protests, arson attacks and bombings led by Shiite Muslims demanding a restoration of parliament suspended in 1975 by the Sunni Muslim-led authorities.

At least 22 people have been killed.

Bahrain: Minister Urges Iran To Stop 'Interference'

JN0906145396 (Internet) AL-AYYAM WWW in Arabic 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', [Bahraini] minister of cabinet affairs and information, called on Iran not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. He said that Bahrain rejects the statement made by Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's in which he said that Tehran is ready to mediate between the government and those whom he called the Shiite opposition.

Al-Mutawwa' said that Iran should admit its mistake and rethink its policy of interference in others' affairs. He added: "I advise the Iranian officials to look after their domestic problems and keep away from our internal affairs so that we can concentrate on development and improving the living conditions of citizens." He said: I advise the Iranian authorities not to use people's causes as tools in the political game, and not to threaten the security of the region.

Bahrain: Cabinet Reviews Security, Urges Iran 'To Revise Its Policy'

JN0906173096 Manama WAKH in English 1615 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, 9 Jun (WAKH) — Bahrain's Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah chaired today the weekly cabinet meeting.

Following the session, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information Muhammad al-Mutawwa' stated that the prime minister began the session by expressing deep gratitude and appreciation for the support and backing expressed by sister and friendly countries, whether Gulf, Arab, Islamic or international, in face of the conspiracy that targeted the security and stability of the country, and the reaffirmations of backing for Bahrain by these countries as well as their expressed categoric rejection of any foreign interference in Bahrain's internal affairs.

The cabinet hailed in particular the communique issued by the tripartite summit held in Damascus yesterday, and the statement of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf Arab states.

The prime minister also hailed the alertness of the security forces and their non-stop efforts in performing their noble mission of vigilance over the security and stability of the country, and spreading reassurance among the people. He also praised the existing cooperation between the security forces and the citizens in protecting the country and safeguarding its gains and achievements, and the public alertness that was demonstrated in aborting the attempt to spread sedition among the ranks of the society.

The prime minister noted the alertness of the security forces in exposing this plot and said that this had the best impact with citizens and residents in this good land, affirming his pride in the feelings expressed by the citizens and the chairman and members of the Consultative Council, the clergymen and the mosque preachers, leading thinkers and columnists, national societies and clubs, and the different work and production sectors, in condemnation of this plot and in reaffirming their position and rallying around the leadership in a manner that clearly projected the national unity of the people of Bahrain and their standing shoulder to shoulder against any danger that could threaten the country.

The cabinet welcomed the invitation to an expanded Arab summit in Cairo, expressing the best wishes for this summit whose convening is a realization of a comprehensive Arab desire for healing Arab ranks and bolstering Arab solidarity. He hailed the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt in giving an uplift to joint Arab action.

The cabinet listened to reports of the ministers who were sent as envoys by H.H. [His Highness] the Amir, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, to the leaders of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Yemen. The ministers briefed the cabinet on their meetings with the leaders of these sister countries who expressed their condemnation of any foreign intervention in the affairs of Bahrain and their support for all measures that the State of Bahrain adopts to bolster its security and stability and protect its achievements, affirming that Arab security and the security of the GCC member states is indivisible, and a matter that dictates caution and alertness, and necessitates close monitoring and continuous cooperation to protect the security of our countries.

The cabinet also expressed hope of closer regional and international cooperation to foster development and progress, and, in this respect, called on Iran to revise its policy so as to gain the friendship of the neighboring countries on basis of mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs.

The cabinet then moved to its agenda, discussing a memorandum from the minister of cabinet affairs and information on the recommendation of the Consultative Council regarding the draft law by decree setting up the Bahrain marketing and promotion council which aims at developing the responsibilities of this council to enhance its effectiveness in promoting and marketing investment projects and encouraging exports.

Acting on the recommendation of the Consultative Council, the cabinet agreed to the draft law by decree.

The minister then briefed the cabinet on the recommendation of the Consultative Council agreeing to the membership of the state of Bahrain in the agreement for biological variants, viewing its positive impact on the environment, and its importance in bolstering technological and practical cooperation, and exchange of information between member states. The cabinet endorsed Bahrain's membership in the agreement.

Finally, the minister of oil and industry briefed the cabinet on the petrochemical conference and exhibition organized by Saudi Aramco in Bahrain, to be opened tomorrow.

Bahrain: Foreign Minister Briefs Envoys on Security Situation

*JN0806135196 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1225 GMT 8 Jun 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 8 Jun (WAKH)—Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah met with the nonresident ambassadors to the State of Bahrain here this morning.

The foreign minister briefed the ambassadors on the developments in the country's security situation, in light of the interrogation with the accomplices involved in the sabotage plot against Bahrain and their confessions. The confessions showed Iran's involvement in preparation, planning, and financing of the plot aimed at undermining the security and stability of Bahrain.

The foreign minister informed the ambassadors of the measures taken by Bahrain against this interference in its internal affairs.

Bahrain: Heir Apparent Says Situation 'Completely Under Control'

*JN1006190896 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1740 GMT 10 Jun 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 10 Jun (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa al-Khalifah, heir apparent and commander in chief of the Bahrain Defense Force, visited the Royal Meridian Hotel today where he met with their highnesses and excellencies the chiefs of staff of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states who are meeting there. His highness welcomed the GCC chiefs of staff, wishing them a pleasant stay in Bahrain. [passage omitted]

In a statement to reporters, His Highness Shaykh Hamad said: We are honored and pleased to host this meeting of our brothers in the GCC. This meeting means a lot to us in terms of translating the strong will to protect nations and affirming the military strength of the GCC.

His highness said that the situation in Bahrain after the discovery of the plot is completely under control, adding that the noble stand of the GCC states showed that Bahrain is part of these states. His highness noted that all sectors of the Bahraini people have denounced the plot against the country.

Asked about ties with Iran, his highness said: Iran cannot but have good relations with its neighbors. Good intentions and good neighborliness is everybody's aim, benefiting all peoples in the region. Iran should take the initiative in this regard.

On placing the issue of terrorism on the agenda of the upcoming Cairo summit, Shaykh Hamad said that the summit will discuss all issues, and there is a general agreement to raise the issue of terrorism at the summit.

Asked about the role of Saudi Arabia vis-a-vis events in Bahrain, his highness said: Bahrain is Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia is bahrain. There is no difference between the two. The custodian of the two holy mosque's care for his sons in Bahrain and his concern over the recent security developments is characteristic of him and the brothers in the kingdom.

Bahrain: Foreign Minister on 'Terrorist Plot,' Gulf Stability

LD1006165996 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
0707 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 9 Jun — Bahrain's Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah has affirmed that his country has become "more optimistic about the stability and future of the region and more convinced that our Gulf future exists within our Gulf family." In an exclusive interview published by the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH, the Bahraini minister said that the stance of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], "stemmed from convictions and courtesy and what happened to us was a plot hatched against all." [passage omitted]

He lauded the statement of the GCC issued at a recent meeting in Riyadh, affirming that "it was one of the clearest statements in dotting the i's and crossing the t's regarding the dangers threatening us from Iran."

He also lauded the stance of the peoples in the region because it signified that "the entity of the GCC has started to reap its fruits. In our view, there is no goal higher than the moral and ethical bond existing among the peoples of the region through thick and thin." [passage omitted]

Shaykh Muhammad expressed the belief that the GCC member-states "have understood the message and reacted accordingly in harmony with this understanding. Experience has taught us that the power of the GCC's performance is capable of blocking the way in front of dangers and this, by itself, must motivate the council to improve its performance economically or politically."

Shaykh Muhammad stressed that his country is "convinced of the importance of the GCC and its role in defending the interests of its member-states. Based on this conviction, we call for the GCC to emerge as a force capable of checking those who try to provoke one of its members. The recent events have shown that we are proceeding along this path."

Shaykh Muhammad affirmed that "the 21st century will witness a qualitative leap in the performance of the GCC economically which will enable us to establish complete economic integration."

Regarding the stances of the superpowers on the recent events in Bahrain, Shaykh Muhammad made clear that "the superpowers have supported our stance because of the evidence they have and because of their knowledge of Iranian behavior during previous years."

Regarding the recent terrorist plot, the minister of foreign affairs said that the plot went through three stages: "The first stage was to encourage the internal front against its [Bahrain's] leadership, the second stage was directly to carry out violent, criminal, and terrorist acts, and the third stage was to plan to topple the existing government and install a regime similar to the Iranian one."

He affirmed that his country "announced the details of the recent terrorist armed conspiracy after having gathered the full evidence and proofs regarding the Iranian role in the conspiracy."

Bahrain: Amir Satisfied With GCC Show of Sympathy Over Iranian Actions

LD0906161796 Riyadh SPA in English
1302 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait, June 9, SPA — Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifa, the Bahraini emir, has expressed satisfaction over the sympathy shown by the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states towards his country.

In a statement to the Kuwait-based AL-SIYASAH newspaper, circulated by the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) today, Shaykh Al Khalifa said 'the terrorist plan has failed completely to penetrate into Bahrain and the other GCC member states.'

The recent events were not only directed against Bahrain, but they were events of certain goals and dimensions, he said noting that the Gulf officials had firmly voiced their deploration of the events.

The Iranian terrorist plan is aimed at expanding tension zones in the world, he said and added 'the big powers have been doing their best to contain these tension zones for the sake of economic development and prosperity programs.'

Meanwhile, Bahraini Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information Muhammad al-Mutawwa', in a statement to the Kuwait-based AL-ANBA' newspaper, has called on Iran to confess the mistake it had committed and revise its policy in the Gulf region and refrain from interfernce in the domestic affairs of the other countries.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Hizballah Members 'Escape' After Failed Coup in Bahrain

NC0806103696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0840 GMT 8 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait 8 June (MENA)— Several Kuwaitis and Bahraini citizens who were residing in Kuwait and who are members of the Kuwaiti Hizballah have managed to escape to unknown destinations before the Kuwaiti authorities could arrest them following the abortive attempt to topple the Bahraini government. Kuwaiti sources said most likely those people left for Iran or states that have friendly relations with Iran.

The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-ANBA' quoted the sources as saying that Bahrain had asked for the extradition of the perpetrators but the Kuwaiti authorities were unable to arrest them because they escaped from Kuwait right after their plot was discovered by the Bahraini authorities.

The sources revealed that the Kuwaiti Hizballah had contacts and coordination with their Bahraini counterparts. They added that Kuwait was considered as a transit point for sending members of Hizballah to the training camps of the Revolutionary Guards in Iran and to those administered by Lebanon's Hizballah in the al-Biqa' Valley. The arrangements were done through Muhammad Habib who is a Bahraini cleric residing in Kuwait.

The sources said that Kuwaiti Hizballah members were working covertly; their task is to facilitate operations.

It is worth mentioning that Kuwait has extradited to Bahrain a member of the Bahraini Hizballah network who is suspected of participating in the recent incidents.

Kuwait: Solidarity With Bahrain Reaffirmed

LD0906164596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1557 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 9 Jun — Kuwait today reiterated its government's and people's solidarity with Bahrain and their support for all the measures taken by this Gulf state to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and stability.

In its weekly meeting held under the chairmanship of His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers said that it is "very satisfied that the criminal attempt aimed at sowing discord and undermining Bahrain's stabibility and progress has been foiled."

In its statement, the Council of Ministers added that "the security and safety of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states are indivisible." It said that it hopes for stabilility and progress for Bahrain. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Cabinet Affirms Support for Peace Process

LD1106130996 Riyadh SPA in English
1231 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, June 11, SPA — Saudi Arabia has reiterated its unwavering position on comprehensive, everlasting and just peace in the region at all levels according to Madrid conference, the land-for-peace principle and international legitimacy resolutions, notably the U.N. Security Council resolution 242, 338 and 425.

While presiding over the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers here last evening, [King Fahd] custodian of the two holy mosques spoke about the outcome of Saudi-Syrian-Egyptian tripartite summit which ended its sessions in Damascus last week. The kingdom's delegation to the summit was led by Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the National Guard.

The monarch confirmed that Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria are always strengthening the efforts aimed at continuing the peace process in the region and abiding by all agreements signed within the framework of the peace process.

Following the cabinet meeting, Information Minister Dr Fuad al-Farisi told SAUDI PRESS AGENCY that the king had underlined the necessity of intensifying the efforts exerted for resumption of negotiations at the Syrian and Lebanese tracts and finalization of Palestinian-Israeli talks in order to achieve a real and comprehensive peace based on the reciprocal respect of mutual rights and duties.

Al-Farisi noted that King Fahd voiced the kingdom's satisfaction over the positive developments which occurred last week at the level of peace process and mini-summits held by some Arab leaders, foremost among them the Saudi-Egyptian-Syrian summit, in which the Saudi delegation was led by Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, to continue the strategy of supporting the peace process and enabling the Palestinian people to attain their legitimate rights including the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with al-Quds [Jerusalem] as its capital city.

Afterwards, the king reviewed the local situation and confirmed the importance of paying utmost attention to the citizens' needs and requirements which should be given top priority by the ministers. He gave instructions to the ministers to continue their field tours, terming them as a positive action and praying to Allah to enable the government to mobilize all its resources in enhancing its plans and programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens.

The information minister noted that the Council of Ministers then examined the topics on its agenda and passed the following resolutions:

— the council decided that the implementation of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] (Persian Gulf) Supreme Council's resolutions in the economic fields shall be decreed at least by the cabinet without contravening to the regulations.

- appointment of Musfir al-Dossary as assistant under secretary of information for planning affairs at grade 14.

- appointment of Mohammad al-Thonayan as assistant under secretary of information for external information at grade 14.

Concluding his statement to SPA, Dr al-Farisi said the cabinet referred a number of transactions to its general committee for finalization of study and submission before the coming meetings.

United Arab Emirates

UAE: Minister Views Dispute With Iran Over 3 Islands

NC1106140196 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 9

[Interview with Hamdan Bin-Zayid, United Arab Emirates minister of state for foreign affairs, by Zakariya Nil; date and place not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Nil] Do you think there is a possible chance of resolving the crisis of the three UAE islands, particularly as there are indications from the Islamic Republic of Iran, as stated by its president, turning a new page and strengthening relations with the Arab countries. Iran stated that, especially in regard to the Gulf countries, it is ready to start negotiations with a UAE delegation to resolve the issue of the three Arab islands?

[Hamdan] Let us clarify some plain facts about this issue. As is known to everyone, Iran occupied part of the Tunb al-Kubra and Tunb al-Sughra Islands in November 1971. It also occupied part of Abu Musa Island in the same month in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed by Iran and the al-Shariqah emirate at the time. [passage omitted]

We stress our determination to continue to demand an end to the occupation of our three islands, while at the same time declaring that we will use peaceful means, including resorting to the International Court of Justice, in order to restore our sovereignty over the three occupied islands. We call on Iran to respond to the repeated calls made by UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan.

You ask me if there is a chance to resolve this conflict at present? The answer depends on the Iranian side. Everyone is aware of what we said at the meeting with Iran's representatives in the Qatari capital in November 1995, and the meeting's failure because of Iran's refusal to agree on the negotiation's agenda. The rejection came from Iran at a time when it was making conflicting statements. Some of its officials said that Iran was ready to fight a war even if it took 80 years, while others said that it was ready to sit down to resolve what they called a "misunderstanding." They have not explained yet what they mean by misunderstanding. There is no misunderstanding on our part. This Iranian stand reveals one of two things: Either the Iranian officials do not have a unified policy on how to resolve the conflict over the islands, hence they have to get their stand straight, or there is basically neither a desire nor willingness to resolve the conflict.

On our part, we emphasize our serious desire to see our relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran characterized by clarity, good neighborliness, Islamic brotherhood, and noninterference in internal affairs so as to provide the appropriate environment for economic development and prosperity for all the peoples of the region. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen: Group Attempts To Start Riots in al-Mukalla

JN1006194496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Ministry of Interior made the following statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA':

This morning, Monday, 10 June 1996, a group of ill-willed people tried to foment riots and provoke attacks against some commercial shops and public and private institutions in the city of al-Mukalla in the Hadhramaut Governorate.

Some culprits attacked security men and fired shots from individual weapons in various places in the city, wounding an officer. The security forces immediately carried out their duty, revealed the identity of the culprits, and exposed and foiled their scheme without sustaining human losses. These forces managed to protect private and public funds and property and maintain public security and order.

The source pointed out that a number of troublemakers and instigators were arrested. Investigations are under way to reveal the objectives of these criminal and suspect actions, he added.

Concluding his statement, the source lauded the sense of responsibility and wisdom enjoyed by the security organs in dealing with this situation. At the same time, the source asserted that the security forces will not hesitate to confront anyone who entertains the idea of attacking citizens and private and public property or undermine the security of the homeland and citizen. All culprits will be brought to trial to receive their just punishment, he added.

Yemen: Salih Receives Mubarak Invitation to Cairo Summit

JN0806204496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, received a telephone call this evening from his brother Muhammad Husni Mubarak, president of sisterly Egypt. President Mubarak briefed the brother president on the results of the tripartite summit that ended in Damascus today. President Mubarak invited President Salih to attend the Arab summit to be held in Cairo between 21 and 23 June.

The brother president welcomed the invitation and praised this step, which will contribute to restoring Arab solidarity and closing Arab ranks.

Iraq: Minister Hails 'Constructive' Talks With French Officials

MM1106100696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Oil Minister Meets With Foreign Ministry Secretary General and Total Chief"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Paris, AL-HAYAH — [passage omitted] [Iraqi Oil Minister] 'Amir Rashid has told AL-HAYAH that the talks he held with [French Foreign Ministry Secretary General] Bertrand Dufourcq focused on the memorandum of understanding signed by Iraq and the United Nations concerning the oil-for-food formula and the need to speed up its implementation. The talks also broached relations with the UN Special Commission entrusted with dismantling banned Iraqi weapons. He described the atmosphere of the talks as "friendly, positive, and constructive," pointing out that the Iraqi side stressed its intention to give priority to French companies, whether with regard to Iraqi oil purchases or Iraq's food imports.

'Amir Rashid said that the Iraqi side has for some years implemented its commitments under Resolution 687, pointing out that he explained this to French officials, who expressed their stand. He declined to say whether the French side promised to help Iraq to speed up the implementation of Clause 22 of Resolution 687. The minister spoke about exploring prospects for cooperation between France and Iraq and ripening [indaj] contracts in the various spheres "so that relations return to their previous status, pending the signing, which is linked to the circumstances of the embargo imposed on Iraq and France's own circumstances." He stressed that the "Iraqi side has the political will to sign these contracts." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Tariq 'Aziz Receives Russia's Posuvalyuk, Primakov Message

JN1006204596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1810 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 10 Jun (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received a written message from Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Yevgeniy Primakov dealing with bilateral ties and ways to promote them. This came during a meeting between Tariq 'Aziz and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk, who is currently visiting Iraq.

During the meeting, Tariq 'Aziz underlined Iraq's desire to see Russian corporations involved in the effort to provide it with its humanitarian needs within the context of the mechanisms of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed on with the United Nations on 20 May.

With regard to Iraq's relations with the UN Special Commission and the UN Security Council, Tariq 'Aziz said that his country has honored all its substantive obligations enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, particularly those in Section C of Resolution 687. He added that the UN Security Council permanent members must shoulder their responsibilities in full to vindicate Iraq by working to lift the unfair sanctions clamped on it. They should work against any attempt to undermine Iraq's sovereignty, dignity, and national security, he maintained.

The meeting, which was attended by Senior Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Sa'd al-Faysal, the Russian ambassador in Baghdad, and members of the delegation accompanying Posuvalyuk, addressed regional and international issues of common interest.

Posuvalyuk's visit to Baghdad is aimed at maintaining coordination and cooperation between Iraq and Russia.

Iraq: 'Fresh Iranian Allegations' on POW's Denied

JN0906141396 Baghdad INA in English 1203 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, June 9, INA—Iraq has categorically denied fresh Iranian allegations on prisoners of war in Iraq, describing them as completely baseless.

In reply to the allegations made by the official in charge of Iranian missing and prisoners of war affairs 'Ali Akbar Abou Turabi, a foreign ministry spokesman reiterated that Iraq is not holding any Iranian POWs, and that it had released all of them under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Abou Turabi last night claimed that Iraq is still holding at least 700 Iranian prisoners of war.

Iraq: Leadership, Opposition Reportedly Form 'National Front'

JN1106104096 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 12 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BILAD has learned that the Iraqi leadership has decided to form a national front that includes, in addition to the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the opposition parties in the government.

Sources said that an [Iraqi] Government envoy held lengthy talks with the Iraqi opposition factions in Kurdistan and a number of Arab capitals. The envoy invited them to achieve reconciliation, join the proposed national front, and participate in the government that will be formed in the near future.

The leaked information said that the Iraqi envoy, Makram Talabani, met with the leaders of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Shiite al-Da'wah Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party. He invited them to assume five portfolios in a national unity government within the framework of political pluralism to maintain Iraqi unity.

Iraq: Regime's Forces Reportedly Attack Kurdish Areas 9 Jun

NC1006173496 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Continuing the dictatorial regime's attacks on residential areas in the Kurdistan region, its forces launched offensive operations against the villages of 'Ali Musa, (Tubur), and (Diyarkalimamrush) in Karkuk Governorate on Sunday, 9 June. The regime's forces comprised eight vehicles and 13 tanks.

The regime's forces destroyed the plantations in the area. The peshmerga forces, Division 208 of the Karkuk force, confronted the attacking forces. A fierce fight ensued, at the end of which the enemy troops were forced to retreat to their previous positions.

Iraq: Al-Majid Family Member Reportedly Killed in Baghdad Attack

JN1006180596 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources said that 'Ala' 'Abd-al-Qadir Sulayman al-Majid was killed in the al-Karradah Dakhil area in Baghdad in early May. They added that unidentified assailants stormed the house of 'Ala' 'Abd-al-Qadir in early June [month as heard] and opened fire on him. After making sure he was dead, they left the house in a private car for an unknown destination in the direction of the suspension bridge near the Presidential Palace.

'Ala' Sulayman was wounded when he took part in the attack on the tyrants' two sons-in-law on 23 February. His brother Tha'ir Sulayman al-Majid was killed in this attack.

Our sources believe that the killing of 'Ala' Sulayman is part of the attacks and counterattacks currently going on between Husayn Kamil's loyalists and supporters and the elements that owe allegiance to 'Udayy Saddam, who masterminded and supervised the attack on the tyrant's two sons-in-law.

Iraq: Regime Forces Kurds To Leave Villages in Kirkuk Area

LD1106134596 Tehran IRNA in English 1256 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kordestan Province, June 11, IRNA — Iraq has forced residents of two Kurdish villages in Kirkuk to leave their homes, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Radio said in a report monitored here on Tuesday [11 June]. According to the radio, the expulsion was in line with a new policy adopted by the Baghdad government barring Iraqi Kurds from living in Kirkuk.

The two, villages located in the central part of Kirkuk, and were the only places under control of the Iraqi regime where Kurds were allowed to live. [as received]

Israel: Security Cabinet Authorizes Peres To Use Army in Lebanon

TA1106043796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Northern Command is continuing its investigation into yesterday's clashes with Hizballah in south Lebanon in which five soldiers were killed and eight were wounded. An initial investigation has determined that most of the soldiers were hit in the first round of fire from the Hizballah ambush. At least one soldier was able to return fire, and one Hizballah gunman was killed. The army is investigating whether the unit acted according to standing orders when they returned on foot to their outpost at dawn.

The security cabinet met last night and authorized Prime Minister and Defense Minister Peres to use the army to respond accordingly. Ministers Shahal, Sarid, Aloni, and Tzaban voted against. The ministers told Qol Yisra'el that because of the opposition in the security cabinet, they believe the prime minister will review the situation again.

Israel: Netanyahu — 'Will Deal With the Situation' in Lebanon

TA1106061596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has said that Israel is facing a very tough problem in Lebanon, whose gravity cannot be exaggerated. We are facing a very strong terrorist offensive against our soldiers and we must act resolutely and aggressively. He said that he was briefed by Prime Minister Peres yesterday and was updated on the situation. Mr. Netanyahu said that when his government is established it will deal with the situation.

Our correspondent Esti Perez reports that Netanyahu made the remarks after his meeting with President 'Ezer Weizman at the Presidential Residence in Jerusalem prior to the president's trip to Turkey today. The president noted in the meeting that Turkey is a good friend of Israel. Netanyahu said that the message he is sending with the president is that Israel will continue its traditional policy regarding Turkey.

Israel: 5 Soldiers Killed in Southern Lebanon; Consultations Held

TA1006144096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1347 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We can now report the following: Five IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers were killed and eight were wounded in a clash with terrorists in south Lebanon this morning. The families have been notified. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports:

[Menashe] The names of four soldiers have so far been made public: First Lieutenant Li'or Armon, 21, of Ramat Gan; Staff Sergeant 'Idan Gavri'el, 20, of Herzliyya; Sergeant Yaniv Ro'e, 21, of 'Afula; First Sergeant Eshel 'Amir Ben-Moshe, 21, of Yuval. The family of the fifth fatality has been notified. The five soldiers were killed and eight others were wounded — one sustained serious wounds, three sustained medium wounds, and four light injuries — in a clash with terrorists before dawn in the eastern sector of the security zone in south Lebanon. The soldiers were returning from an operation in 'Ali al-Tahir when they were fired on. Most of the force — which was from the Nahal Brigade's bomb disposal company, considered one of the best companies in the brigade — was hit.

As far as is known, the IDF force was moving when ambushed by the terrorists, who fired light weapons from close range. Hizballah's announcement said the terrorists ambushed the IDF force. One terrorist was killed in the clash. According to Lebanese reports, IDF artillery hit a vehicle, killing a Lebanese passenger.

Shim'on Peres, the prime minister and defense minister, Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or, and Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq visited the Northern Command this morning. The defense minister and chief of staff held a debriefing. [end Menashe]

In the studio is our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. Prime Minister Peres held consultations following the incident. The following are the details we are permitted to report:

[Raz] Special consultations were held at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv a short time ago. The defense establishment's top echelon held deliberations on developments in Lebanon and the political, defense, and intelligence repercussions of the situation there. Of course, we cannot report on any decisions that might have been made at the meeting. The prime minister is now briefing his successor, Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu, on the decisions being considered in the wake of the consultations. It must be remembered that we are in a transitional period between two governments, something that cannot be ignored in view of the difficult, complex situation along the Lebanese border.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1400 GMT on 10 June adds: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres called it a grave terrorist attack and vowed that Israel would respond at a place and time of its choosing. Mr. Peres warned Hizballah against further terrorist activity and against heating up the sector at the expense of the inhabitants of Lebanon. He sent condolences from himself and the government to the families of the fatalities."]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1400 GMT reports that the terrorists come out of a built-up area, which "constitutes a violation of the understandings reached in Lebanon."]

Israel: Netanyahu Reportedly To Offer Syria Withdrawal From Lebanon

TA1006185996 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 9 Jun 96 p 7

[Report by Yusuf Hamid]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — It seems that the first task that new Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu wants to carry out is to explore the possibility of conducting serious negotiations with Syria. In this context, informed Israeli sources told AL-NAHAR that the so-called department of Netanyahu advisers is holding contacts with an Arab political figure from the 1948 areas [inside Israel]. This figure enjoys what has been described as good relations with decisionmakers in the Syrian regime.

The informed sources add that this department of advisers, in continuous coordination with this figure, has actually started to draw up a potential negotiating scenario that, in substance, would be acceptable to the Syrians.

Netanyahu wants to prove to the Israelis and the world that his administration has managed, at the beginning of its term, to activate the Syrian negotiating track more seriously than the Peres administration.

The possible price that Israel should pay for this is to withdraw from south Lebanon in return for Syria's agreement to engage in serious talks with the Hebrew state concerning the Golan Heights. It is expected that Syria will accept this proposal because it cannot appear before its own and Arab public opinion as opposing the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the territories of its neighbor and sister, Lebanon.

If Damascus agrees to this proposal, it will in return enjoy the world's support and backing because it will prove that it is serious in the current peace process.

As for Netanyahu, with this step he will be able to prove to the Israelis that by withdrawing from south Lebanon he managed to put an end to Hizballah's repeated attacks on north Israel, which Shim'on Peres' recent Grapes of Wrath operation failed to do. This is the peace that will provide security for the Israelis and on which Netanyahu concentrated in his election propaganda.

Israel: Likud Drafts 'Softer' Government Guidelines

TA1106092396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 11 Jun 96 p 16

[Report by Arye Bender and Menahem Rahat]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud has introduced a long list of changes into new draft government guidelines prepared yesterday — this in comparison to the first draft, exclusively published by MA'ARIV last Friday [7 June], which caused a great uproar in the Arab world and among the Palestinians.

The version published Friday included three prominent Noes: No to a Palestinian state, no to the division of Jerusalem, and no to concessions on the Golan Heights. The new and softer version, which appears to be an allaying message in anticipation of the Arab summit scheduled for next week in Cairo, does not explicitly say that Israel will not withdraw from the Golan Heights under any circumstances, and emphasizes that Israel will hold negotiations with Syria without any preconditions.

Following are the main amendments inserted into the guidelines:

Golan Heights

The first version reads: **"The Golan Heights is an area essential to the existence of Israel. The Golan is an important Zionist settlement region of the state, that is essential for its security and for the preservation of its water resources. The government will insist on Israel's sovereignty over the Golan in any peace arrangement, and will bolster settlement enterprises on the Golan."**

The new and softer version reads: **"The government considers the Golan Heights a vital area for the security of the state and for the preservation of its water resources and should insist on preserving it under Israeli sovereignty."**

In addition, the new guidelines state in another place: **"The Israeli Government will hold negotiations with Syria without any preconditions."**

The new version leaves room for a political arrangement on the Golan and does not tie the hands of the Netanyahu government in the future. Knesset Member [MK] Moshe Qatzav, chairman of the Likud Knesset faction, yesterday explained that "the new draft is not aimed at shackling the government but rather at granting it freedom of action to deal with a changing reality. Syria must not come with preconditions, and we agree that we too should avoid preconditions."

Negotiations With the Palestinians

Regarding the negotiations with the Palestinians, the new draft, like the previous one, does not mention the Oslo accords.

The first draft reads: **"The government will conduct negotiations with the Palestinian Authority [PA], while insisting that the Palestinians fulfill all their commitments."**

The new draft adds: **"The Israeli Government will offer to the Palestinians an arrangement allowing them to manage their own affairs freely in the framework of a self-government."**

The new version does not include the clause in the first draft, which read: **"The eastern border of the State of Israel will be the Jordan River. This will be the permanent border line between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan."**

The new version includes a general clause stating: **"The government will act toward strengthening settlement activity in all parts of the country, including its expansion and development."** Likud officials are completing a special chapter that will deal with the future of the settlements in the territories.

MK Qatzav explains: "Our position is clear. The negation of a Palestinian state in no way contradicts any commitment given by the Labor government. At the same time we do not intend to turn the wheel back by ignoring the facts on the ground. The first condition, however, is that the Palestinians must implement the commitments they made to the Israeli Government. If they fail to do this they will have a problem. Statements such as those made by 'Arafat in al-'Aqabah regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state are a violation of the agreement. If they fulfill the agreement we will hold businesslike negotiations."

Additional Changes

In the previous draft Israel was defined as **"the democratic state of the Jewish nation."** The new draft reads: **"The State of Israel is the state of the Jewish people which maintains a democratic regime."**

In the wake of the grave incidents in the north the new draft reads: **"The Israeli Government will act toward lifting the security threat on the northern border and will guarantee economic prosperity to residents of the northern settlements."**

Another clause inserted at the demand of the National Religious Party [NRP] states: **"The Israeli Government will implement all means at its disposal to bring back the POW's and MIA's, and will insist on this issue during negotiations with the relevant Arab elements."**

The Third Way has already stated that the new draft is unacceptable. The party demands to include in the guidelines clauses expressing a deeper commitment to the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, and the continuation of the Oslo process.

The NRP has also joined the demand to strengthen the commitment to the Golan Heights. The NRP has also included a series of changes it demands to include in the guidelines. The NRP did not settle just for the demand that the Palestinians implement all their commitments; rather, it demands to detail them in the guidelines: "To prevent terror attacks, extradite killers, stop anti-Israeli incitement, and allow the movement of Israelis in all parts of the PA areas."

The chapter dealing with religious and state affairs will be added to the guidelines only after the negotiations with the religious factions are completed.

Israel: Gold Outlines Terms for Netanyahu, 'Arafat Meeting

BR1006130996 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 10 Jun 96 p 7

[Report on interview with Dore Gold, advisor to Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu, by Lorenzo Cremonesi in Jerusalem; date not given: "'Arafat, Here Are Our Conditions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — "A meeting between Netanyahu and 'Arafat is possible, but only after the PLO has met all the pledges made with Israel." This was Dore Gold's response to the Arab world's barrage against the future prime minister and the prospect of a definitely nationalist Israeli Government.

A major summit is scheduled to take place in Cairo in 11 days' time to formulate a pan-Arab strategy. It will be his task to provide replies. "For the present we are adopting a wait-and-see attitude. We will judge the results," he said cautiously. But last week he gave to understand that he considers it virtually impossible for an agreement to be reached with Syria in the medium term. Al-'Asad is afraid that peace with Israel could destabilize his regime, and he is now less keen to regain Golan (the areas occupied by Israel in 1967). Dore Gold, at the age of only 42, left his research into U.S. policy in the Middle East at Tel Aviv University's Strategic

Studies Center to become Netanyahu's right-hand man in relations with the Arabs.

And it is probably Gold that will head the new government's Security Council, the body on which the future of the peace process depends to a large extent. Immediately after the 29 May elections Netanyahu asked him to contact the Palestinian Autonomy's second-in-command, Abu Mazen [name as published]. "It was the first time that a member of the Likud Party (the major right-wing party) has spoken directly and officially with a PLO representative. So we agreed that the foundations of dialogue must be built. But while we are doing our best to reassure the other side, we are very unhappy about the provocative behavior of 'Arafat and his officials."

Gold criticized 'Arafat's statements about the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem — "rash and irresponsible remarks." He issued the following appeal to the EU: "You have a positive role in the peace process, but it is important for you not to issue a priori negative verdicts on the possible results."

But the key question remains without a clear answer. When will 'Arafat and Netanyahu meet? "First, the leaders of the Autonomy must show that they have met at least three conditions — the disarmament of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] (the Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist group,) its outlawing, and the formulation of a new PLO constitutional charter, as promised in Oslo three years ago." Gold remains inflexible on this point. Unlike the Labor Party — which as early as two months ago said that the abrogation of the old constitution (dating from 1968, which asserted the need to destroy Israel) would be sufficient — he makes the continuation of the negotiations dependent on the formulation of a replacement one within the next six months. Will it be a long wait until we see any real progress? "No, but the commitments apply to both sides; pressure must not be brought to bear only on us. Netanyahu said during the election campaign that he would be willing to meet with 'Arafat if he keeps his promises and if it benefits the Jewish state."

What about the pledges made by Israel? According to draft plans in the government program, Netanyahu could go back on the Labor Party's promises to 'Arafat: Will you withdraw from Hebron (the last city in the West Bank yet to come under the Autonomy's control? "For the present the prime minister is still Shim'on Peres. Netanyahu has yet to form a government, to choose his ministers, and to draw up a program. Until then everything remains open." But the new coalition seems inflexible on one point: The establishment of Jewish colonies in the occupied territories will resume at full speed. Gold seemed to confirm this: "Rabin himself said that the expansion of the settlements does not conflict with the agreements with the PLO. Our policy will take account of the fact that those regions are inhabited by Israeli citizens who need security and homes. We want to prevent all activities in those areas from being exploited by the Palestinians as a pretext for a crisis."

Israel: Egyptian Envoy, Netanyahu Adviser Discuss Peace Process

TA1006155396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 0930 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Basyuni, the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, met today at the Knesset with Dr. Dore Gold, the prime minister-elect's political adviser. Our correspondent Sa'id Mu'addi reports that during the meeting they reviewed the situation from all angles and reaffirmed the need to move on all the peace negotiations tracks so that a comprehensive peace could be achieved.

Israel: Russia's Primakov Calls, Seeks Role in Peace Process

TA1006170296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1430 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov called Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu. Our correspondents Shim'on Aran and Sa'id Mu'addi report that the Russian minister congratulated Mr. Netanyahu on his election as the prime minister of Israel and stressed Moscow's desire to participate in the political process in the Middle East in its capacity as one of the cosponsors of the Madrid conference.

For his part, Mr. Netanyahu reaffirmed the commitment of his forthcoming government to continue the peace process and preserve security.

Israel: Netanyahu Urges 'Resolute' Fight of Terror; MK Blames Peres

TA1006181996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Video report by Dan Scemama]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Scemama] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has said that Israel is facing a difficult struggle against terrorism on various fronts. This battle must be waged in an aggressive, resolute, and intelligent manner. This will be our policy, Netanyahu said. Here are some more reactions by Likud officials.

[Begin recording] [Likud Knesset Member [MK] Tzahi Hanegbi] I definitely blame the Peres government for stopping Operation Grapes of Wrath without any reason or justification. This, from a desire to avoid harming its relations with the Israeli Arab community and out of other electoral considerations. The direct result is that Hizballah enjoys a security to attack our soldiers and shed their blood. Any proper country would establish a commission of inquiry. As soon as the new Knesset convenes, I will demand that it appoint a national commission of inquiry to examine the matter.

[Likud MK Moshe Qatzav] I would like to count on the current Israeli Government — and if not on the outgoing leadership, then on the new government — which, following consultations with the security forces, will provide the appropriate response to these terrorist attacks. The security forces are capable of preventing such attacks.

[Likud MK Dan Meridor] I suggest we refrain from presenting any off-the-cuff solutions. In order to provide a serious response, we must have good intelligence, know what happened, who initiated the clash, and what part Syria played in the incident. In order to prepare an orderly plan to resolve the problem, we must examine the issue in all its complexity in an attempt to make a fundamental change in the situation in northern Israel and south Lebanon. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Calls Hebron Situation 'Very Complex'

TA1006140996 (Internet) Shomron News Service in English 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu told reporters on Thursday [6 June], that he is studying the issue of Hebron, and that security will be the first criteria in determining government policy on the matter.

Netanyahu characterized the situation in Hebron as very complex. The Prime Minister-elect said he will negotiate with the PLO Authority. Responding to PLO Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's statement this week, in which 'Arafat said a "Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital would soon be established", Netanyahu said he had heard similar declarations in the past.

"We are taking another approach of self-rule, with Jerusalem remaining united under Israeli control," Netanyahu said. "I suggest not dealing with declarations, but rather with confidence building steps."

Netanyahu noted that he had spoken with several Arab leaders this week and said that those who were surprised by the election results were quickly reassured. The Prime Minister-elect predicted that Israel would soon restart negotiations with Syria. Netanyahu pointed out that during the Madrid Conference, Israel emphasized it would remain on the Golan Heights and al-Asad attended anyway.

Jordan: 'High-Ranking' Official on U.S. Strategy Toward Iraq

MM1106110496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Jun 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Amman: Washington Has Halted Attempts To Topple Saddam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A high-ranking Jordanian official has said that the U.S. Administration has modified its policy aimed at toppling Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's regime, replacing it with an attempt to contain and gradually open up to the regime.

The Jordanian official, who was speaking to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT after his return from a visit to the United States recently, added that U.S. approval of the oil-for-food deal and the subsequent decision to allow U.S. companies to deal with Iraq are a clear indication of a different U.S. strategy toward the Iraqi regime.

The official, who asked to remain anonymous, said that the Iraqi opposition's impotence, the flexibility displayed by the Iraqi regime with regard to Security Council Resolution 986, and the emergence of several new regional and international developments have prompted the U.S. Administration to halt the implementation of a multifaceted scheme to topple the Baghdad regime.

Jordan: 'Sources' Deny Inviting Iraq's 'Aziz But Would Welcome Visit

MM1006111296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Jun 96 p 2

[Report by 'Imad al-Furayh: "Jordan Welcomes Possible Visit by Tariq 'Aziz, Denies Iraqi Conditions or Curbing of Opposition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Authoritative Jordanian sources have refused to confirm or deny the report of a possible visit to Jordan by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. However, they did not rule out a tendency to ease tension in relations between Jordan and Iraq. The sources repeated their denial of the existence of any Iraqi conditions for improving these relations. The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that all these orientations have nothing to do with the presence of Iraqi opposition organizations in Jordan, denying any attempt to check the opposition.

An informed Iraqi source confirmed in Amman that Tariq 'Aziz will visit Jordan this month, June, to meet with King Husayn and senior Jordanian officials in order to lay down new foundations for restoring relations between the two countries to their normal status. Unofficial Jordanian sources had spoken of Iraqi conditions for restoring relations to their previous status. The most important conditions are: the replacement of the Jordanian Government headed by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti; the closure of [Iraqi] opposition offices in Amman, first and foremost that of the Iraqi National Accord Movement; and the handover to the Iraqi military of men who defected to Jordan, first and foremost Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji, former Iraqi chief of staff.

The authoritative Jordanian sources said that Jordan has not invited 'Aziz to visit Jordan. However, it would welcome such a visit without any conditions, which do not exist in the first place.

The informed Iraqi source in Amman said that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is not at present in a position to impose any conditions on Jordan, but he might set such conditions in the future. That is likely to happen if the Iraqi economic situation improves, even partially. The only threat to which Iraq could resort to put pressure on Jordan is not to use al-'Aqabah port for the delivery of the goods heading for Iraq when the clauses of Resolution 986 are implemented.

Iraqi opposition sources in Amman have strongly denied that their informational or political activities have been curbed by the Jordanian authorities, or that some of their members have been interrogated or harassed by official Jordanian organs.

Jordan: King Husayn Discusses Netanyahu, Peace Process

JN0806200596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 8 Jun 96

["Full text" of interview with King Husayn of Jordan by unidentified ITN correspondent in Amman; date not given — recorded, in English with Arabic subtitles]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Correspondent] When Netanyahu was elected prime minister, it was said that Yasir 'Arafat was in a state of shock.... [edited break in recording] And much calmer, even optimistic. I wonder what the basis of that was? Do you feel that Binyamin Netanyahu is a man you can do business with?

[Husayn] I believe he's a man that we can do business with, and, furthermore, I believe that the peace process is irreversible, and that there is a total commitment to all that has been agreed upon, and to build on what has been achieved so far. And besides my interpretation, watching at very close range events in Israel — mind that this was the choice of the Israeli electorate of the person of the prime minister, under their new arrangements, and nothing else. It wasn't a question of a victory of one side or another. There are no sides when it comes to peace. I think everyone seeks peace and security, and I hope that this will apply to all of us.

[Correspondent] Do I understand from that you judge Binyamin Netanyahu to be, above all, a pragmatist, because many observers in Israel talk about him being a hard-liner? But that doesn't seem compatible with your firm belief that the peace process is now irreversible.

[Husayn] I believe it is irreversible, Sir, and I hope time will prove me right. There is no alternative. There is no other option. We've wasted enough time on wars and destruction in this part of the world, so it's about time that we really gave our best to secure a worthy future for the coming generations of all the countries in this area. So I don't think that....[pauses] If you look back, you'll have probably noticed, historically, that many people who appear to be extreme at one point, when in a position of responsibility, had to moderate their positions. And that goes right across the board in terms of Labor, of Likud. Certainly, a lot of it, in terms of positions taken, can be attributed to us in the Arab world. I think we didn't help ourselves at all by, for many years, saying things that were not practical, logical, or constructive.

[Correspondent] Because there seems to be in Israel at the moment a very vibrant debate about whether the new prime minister is pragmatic or indeed a hard-liner, as he perhaps made in his statements in the election campaign. It seems that you believe, above all else, that once he's in power, he will prove to be pragmatic.

[Husayn] This is my feeling and my belief. I hope I'm proven right.

[Correspondent] Of course, that is, I suppose, the basic message of that successful summit you held in al-'Aqabah — that you mustn't prejudge his politics?

[Husayn] Neither of us should prejudge. That applies to myself and to all those who were present there. I think it's the feeling of many others in the region that it is an error to prejudge. We've come such a long way. All right, there are obstacles, there are difficulties, there are challenges, but it was far worse at the very beginning. So, let's hope that we can all join and do our best for a better future in this region.

[Correspondent] Nevertheless, Your Majesty, I suppose it is true to say, and I wonder if you agree with this, that if he were to implement a campaign promise, such as a significant expansion of Jewish settlements, then that would be a severe blow to the peace process?

[Husayn] I believe it would be a severe blow to the peace process, and I hope that this will not happen.

[Correspondent] And the same in terms of a refusal to pull out troops from Hebron?

[Husayn] Sir, everything that they have agreed upon with their Palestinian counterparts I hope will be adhered to by both sides. And we shall give any support, and all support, for further constructive moves in the times ahead.

[Correspondent] You made a very powerful statement that you believe that the peace process, in historical terms, is irreversible. Do you think that a comprehensive peace can be achieved without the creation of a Palestinian state?

[Husayn] A Palestinian state is very dear to the hearts of Palestinians, and I hope that they will themselves decide exactly what is in their best interest. And I hope that they will achieve their state, if that is what they wish.

[Correspondent] You're known of course, Your Majesty, to many people in Britain as an outstanding observer of the Middle East politics. I wonder if you believe in your lifetime you will see the birth of Palestine, the rebirth of Palestine?

[Husayn] That depends on how long I am going to extend beyond this point, but I do believe that Palestinians will secure, and will have, and exercise their rights on their legitimate soil.

[Correspondent] So your instinct will be that the Palestinian state is achievable within a short period of time — despite, apparently, Benjamin Netanyahu's statement yesterday saying that that's incompatible with his government beliefs?

[Husayn] I think it is up to the Palestinians to decide whether they will want their independent state, how independent will it be, what the relations will be with others — be that the Israeli dimension or Arab dimensions, including Jordan, in particular, where we have many close ties. But there is nothing worse than setting down our positions in advance. I have found, and I mentioned it yesterday, that this whole business of confederation with Jordan not be talked about at all. If anyone wants to harm relations between Jordanians and Palestinians, they will suggest that. If there is any reason for mistrust, such suggestions are incompatible with that fact. So we will help. If we have any credibility in this world, we will use it to help bring about a comprehensive peace in this area and to serve the Palestinian people and let the future take care of itself. When people are free, when they are able to think for themselves under different conditions, then we will see how relations develop.

[Correspondent] I was going to ask you about that, Your Majesty. Do see you a role of something of an intermediary between, for example, Israel and the PLO, or do you see your role as a chief supporter of the Palestinian cause?

[Husayn] I see myself as using my best assets and possibilities to help bridge gaps and to help bring about progress. As far as Jordan and Israel are concerned, we are in a state of peace. We recognize it and will stick to it and adhere to the letter and the word. We will help. I believe we have the ability to do so, as much as we can. We hope the results will be positive.

[Correspondent] How do you think you can best help, in terms of playing that role of bridging what may appear to be at the moment a very deep gap between....

[Husayn, interrupting] No one has asked us as yet to intervene in that regard. But I think that we have, in any event, Sir, in the past not refrained from suggesting to the Israelis or to the Palestinians what we believe, or believed, was in the interest of progress towards peace. And if there was a position that we could not tolerate or accept, in terms of the principle or the fact, we made our views clear. I think that we have a great deal of credibility, therefore, with everyone. I hope that we can use it in the right direction. What we want, Sir, is a secure, happy, prosperous future for everyone, one based on justice and the coming together of the children of — the descendants of the children of Abraham.

[Correspondent] One final question, Your Majesty: You talk very powerfully, as I said, about the irreversibility of the peace process. But the Middle East in recent years has been a roller coaster in terms of emotions in terms of peace and conflict. I just want to probe a little bit about why you believe the peace process is so irreversible, when there have been so many setbacks.

[Husayn] Because the other option is so futile, Sir. It has proven to be futile. It has been a waste of time and lives. It has brought only misery. It has drained resources. It has not given people what is their right in this part of the world. And, I don't know, I suppose there are those who still will try to think of their limited vision or purpose in life, of destroying any chances to get to peace. But I believe the overwhelming majority of people really want it.

[Correspondent] And your message to those extremists, those who think that destroying this peace is a away forward?

[Husayn] Open their eyes and open their hearts. And respect the will of the majority, the overwhelming majority.

[Correspondent] You strike me, Your Majesty, as remarkably optimistic, remarkably robust in your belief in the peace process despite many turbulent years.

[Husayn] I am, Sir. I had the dream, throughout my life, of contributing something so that, long after I am gone, people will say that he did something, he contributed something for a better life for this region, for its people. And I refuse to be anything but optimistic and anything but determined to do whatever I can towards that end.

[Correspondent] For Jews and Arabs alike?

[Husayn] For Jews and Arabs alike.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty, thank you very much for talking to us?

[Husayn] Thank you so much.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much indeed, Sir.

Jordan: King Husayn Accepts Invitation to Cairo Summit

JN0906081696 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn accepted an invitation from his brother Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak to attend an Arab summit in Cairo 21-23 June. A number of Arab countries also received official invitations to the summit. In Israel, the prime minister elect's office issued a statement commenting on the tripartite summit held in Damascus yesterday. The statement says that a response to the results of the summit will be announced after the formation of a new Israeli Government. Details are in the following report:

During the telephone call His Majesty King Husayn received from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak yesterday, an official invitation was extended to His Majesty to attend an Arab summit in Cairo 21-23 June, which His Majesty King Husayn accepted. His Majesty said that his country is always eager to respond to any sincere Arab call for reuniting the Arabs. The two leaders also reviewed the agenda for the summit, which will focus on building bridges of confidence and Arab solidarity; reviving the nation's solidarity and cooperation; supporting the peace process; and pushing forward peace efforts within the framework of the Madrid conference and international legitimacy Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the land-for-peace principle. His Majesty King Husayn stressed Jordan's principled and firm stand on the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East; to make relentless efforts to restore their rights to the Palestinian people;

to continue work on restoring its territories and sovereignty over them to sisterly Lebanon.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti received two telephone calls: from Yusuf Bin-'Alawi, minister of state for foreign affairs in the sisterly Sultanate of Oman, and from Hamdan Bin-Zayid, minister of state for foreign affairs in the sisterly United Arab Emirates. They exchanged common viewpoints on the latest political developments in the region. Al-Kabariti mentioned to Bin-'Alawi and Bin-Zayid the need for joint action to ensure the success of Arab efforts to revive and achieve Arab solidarity and unify the Arabs' word in order to confront existing challenges and support the peace process and joint Arab action. [passage omitted]

Jordan: 'Numerous' Subversive Operations of Syrian Origin Foiled

MM0706135396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Announces Arrest of Infiltrators From Organization Allied With Syria"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A senior Jordanian official has denied the existence of Egyptian mediation between Syria and Jordan to clear the air between them. Meanwhile other authoritative sources stressed in Amman yesterday that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's statement on relations between Damascus and Amman indicates that the matter was discussed at the al-'Aqabah summit. However, observers in London have noted that the Jordanian authorities did not hesistate to announce the arrest of elements belonging to Ahmad Jibril's group, namely the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, which is allied with Syria, and that the authorities accused these elements, who had weapons with them, of infiltrating the border to carry out operations to undermine security and stability in Jordan.

The senior Jordanian official told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that clearing the air with Syria requires first that there be no attempt to threaten or harm Jordanian national security in any way. He confirmed that Jordan has foiled numerous subversive operations aimed at undermining its security, and that Syria was their source.

The Jordanian official's statements and those of observers in London were made after Syrian and Jordanian leaders had exchanged criticisms. [passage omitted]

Jordan: SHIHAN Views Background of Crisis With Syria

JN0706152496 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 8-14 Jun 96 pp 6, 31

["Exclusive report"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, Damascus—A silent crises seems to have been brewing between the two palaces in Amman and Damascus for a long time. This crisis has snowballed day after day until it reached the point of trading accusations and questioning the legitimacy of one another.

His majesty the king insinuated at a news conference in al-'Aqabah in the aftermath of the tripartite summit that his personal relationship with President Hafiz al-Asad has not changed or deteriorated and that it is governed by mutual respect and friendliness. Nonetheless, he implicitly acknowledged the existence of political differences between the two sides. Likewise, in his most recent news conference, President al-Asad made no clear statement that there is an estrangement with Jordan. The president gave a general answer to a question in this regard. When asked about the need for a meeting of the cordon states, the Syrian president's answer was too general because he did not want to commit himself to a clear position in this regard.

The Syrian president is not in the habit of making frequent statements. This notwithstanding, his cabinet members and those close to him have unequivocally declared their animosity toward Jordan. They said Jordan is taking advantage of the protection provided by Israel, while working against Syria. It is true that relations between the two palaces, in terms of protocol niceties and personal chemistry, have been based on mutual respect over the past few years. However, the recent crisis triggered by media escalation and the fiery statements made by the Syrian side, which were accompanied by a sabotage campaign and attempts to infiltrate into Jordan via the Syrian borders, may push relations between Husayn and al-Asad toward a political showdown if Egypt's President Mubarak fails to defuse the dispute as soon as possible by convening a tripartite or four-way summit that would return relations to normal.

Observers in the two capitals believe that the reshuffling of the cards in the Middle East, as manifested in the open and secret bilateral and tripartite contacts aimed at creating new realities, might contribute to the creation of new alliances. In this regard, they recalled the Syrian moves toward Iraq, as well as Syria's efforts to strengthen its ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia simultaneously to face up to the Turkey-Israel-U.S. axis and also to the Arab peace axis represented by Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority.

Given this new reality, which is casting dark shadows over the entire region, SHIHAN chose to open the dossier of Jordanian-Syrian relations.

Jordanian-Syrian relations have entered an extremely critical stage over the past few days, with the deterioration in relations crossing the red lines that are clearly defined in diplomatic workings and inter-Arab relations. Syrian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas, who is President Hafiz al-Asad's right hand and who is very close to the decisionmaking center, made statements in which he attacked Jordan. He said that the only justification for Jordan's existence is to serve as a shield for Israel.

Politically speaking, these statements mean a clear Syrian trend towards escalating the media war between the two countries — a war that erupted after Jordan signed a peace agreement with Israel.

The crisis in relations between the two countries is not new. However, this crisis has worsened recently, following Talas' fiery, unprecedented statements. The questions that should be raised here are: What are the reasons for this escalation, and what are the causes of the crisis between the two countries?

First, it should be remembered that differences emerged between the two countries following the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. We should also remember the serious statements made by the Syrian vice president, who told [former Jordanian prime minister] Prince Zayd Bin-Shakir: "It does not give me honor to shake hands with those who shook hands with Rabin." His majesty the king replied to this harsh statement in a speech at King Husayn Medical Center: "It does not give us honor to shake hands with them." These harsh statements prompted observers to predict that ties between Jordan and Syria will be severed soon.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that Syrian policy is marked by hypocrisy and the use of a double standard against Jordan. All of Jordan's relentless attempts to mend fences with Syria failed. The crisis became even worse. What made things even more complicated was the tripartite coordination initiated at the Cairo and 'al-Aqabah summits. Damascus believes coordination between Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian National Authority aims to corner Syria and force it to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Damascus received information that Amman has convinced Mubarak and 'Arafat that it sides with Arab interests and is not relying on Israel's might, a charge that Damascus tries to promote.

This Syrian position was clearly reflected in the newspaper TISHRIN, when it said that some Arab states are taking advantage of Israel's protection to hurt Arabs. However, it did not mention Jordan by name. Damascus also began to play Saudi Arabia against Jordan, especially since a senior Saudi official maintains special ties with Damascus.

According to political observers, these developments were designed to give the Syrian leadership the impression that it is beleaguered and besieged to make it sign a peace treaty. It sought to remedy this dilemma by escalating the situation with Jordan. In fact, Damascus waited for the appropriate opportunity to unleash this escalation.

Damascus did not wait long to start its media warfare. Informed government sources revealed that Prince Hasan's speech at the opening session of the Arab strategic conference on peace and future options, delivered on his behalf by Dr. Jawad al-'Anani in Cairo last month, particularly the portion of the speech regarding Syria, irritated the Syrian Government and its leaders immensely. Damascus interpreted this portion as an incitement and instigation against Syria.

The portion of Prince Hasan's speech on Syria says: "With regard to negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track, it is clear that the Lebanese and Syrian tracks have invariably undergone greater separation. It is abundantly clear that U.S. policy seeks the prize of a Syrian-Israeli peace deal. It created the realities that would make such a deal acceptable to both sides. It froze talks on the Lebanese track so as not to antagonize Syria and agreed to bilateral negotiations in the United States, thus giving the impression that it accepts a regional role for Syria.

"Moreover, the United States sought to meet an Israeli demand by drawing Syria into a peace deal that the Syrian leadership was perceived as being reluctant to endorse, given its domestic, regional, and international calculations. This explains the suspension of the negotiations until the Lebanon incidents took place. These incidents sent a clear message to Syria — that it is incapable of protecting Lebanon from Israeli violence and that Syria itself might be hit in Lebanon because of accusations that it supports terrorism and because of its close relations with Iran.

"Pending the outcome of Israeli elections, it seems that more pressure might be put on Syria to make it enter into serious negotiations. Everything indicates there is a change in the U.S. policy toward Syria. An understanding to make progress on the Lebanese-Israeli track might be reached. This would lend the Lebanese track a measure of independence, albeit without nullifying cooperation and consultations with Syria. Moreover, pressure on Syria will be stepped up to score points to the advantage of the U.S. president ahead of the upcoming U.S. presidential elections. It is unlikely Europe will take on a role that will ease the pressure on Syria to be more flexible in the negotiations. The achievement of comprehensive peace is now perceived to be contingent upon the Syrian stand," concludes the excerpt from his highness the prince's speech.

According to government sources, it seems Syria considered this speech to be Jordanian incitement to strike at it. It also seems that the Syrians gave his highness's speech a different interpretation. This led to the statements by Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas to the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in response to a question about Jordanian-Israeli moves to build a dam on the Syrian part of al-Yarmuk River in the Golan Heights. He said: Jordan was created to separate Saudi Arabia, the land of the Islamic message, and Syria, the land of Arab conquests. Moreover, this entity was created to protect Israel and be its shield.

Talas — who incidentally is deputy commander in chief of the Syrian Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and minister of defense — added: If we look at the map of Jordan, we will see a neck that extends toward the east of Jordan that has no geopolitical value except to prevent communication between Saudi Arabia and Syria. This was the goal of the colonialists in the Sykes-Picot Agreement to prevent contact and interaction between the peoples of the two fraternal countries. The colonialists deliberately sought to fragment Greater Syria among Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. You will notice that there are many families spread throughout these countries. Talas attacked the Jordanian leadership, saying: At one time the Jordanian leadership encroached upon Egypt's regional role and wanted to have a more important leadership role than Egypt.

Ranking political decisionmakers in Jordan discussed the statements by Lieutenant General Talas and agreed not to respond with similar statements to avoid exacerbating the situation, especially in light of Egyptian efforts to mediate Jordanian-Syrian differences. However, a Jordanian official told SHIHAN: Talas' statements indicate that the man suffers from hallucinations. The source noted that these statements do not reflect the Syrian leadership's stand at all. He said that the utterance of such statements is shameful.

The Jordanian-Syrian crisis is not only confined to statements. Indeed, it has escalated to the point of leveling direct accusations, as well as Syria's involvement in terrorist operations that targeted Jordanian security. Well-informed government sources said that scores of infiltrators from Syria have been arrested. These infiltrators were planning to carry out terrorist operations inside Jordan, particularly against Israeli tourists. These are the operations that His Majesty King Husayn referred to when he was asked about Syria's involvement in this issue. The king said: All I can say is that if it were not for the alertness of the people and security officials, we would have faced a great tragedy.

Authorized sources said that Jordan tightened its security measures along the Jordanian-Syrian border after terrorists and saboteurs stepped up their infiltration from Syria to carry out bombing operations against Israeli tourists in Jordan. The sources also said that Damascus was contacted over the issue and that the Jordanian Government has evidence of infiltration attempts across the Syrian border, but that the Syrian Foreign Ministry denied any knowledge of these incidents.

The sources asserted that these terrorists wanted to strike Jordanian interests and assassinate prominent politicians and that the Jordanian leadership, according to diplomatic sources, raised the Syrian-Iranian involvement with foreign diplomats and visitors last year. Security measures were tightened around Israeli tourist buses, some Jordanian officials, and sensitive sites in the country.

Informed Jordanian security sources also said that the confessions of some defendants show Syria's complicity and that the terrorists infiltrated from Syria to carry out terrorist operations, the foremost of which was an attempt to explode a booby-trapped car near the convoy of a senior Jordanian official.

Investigations also show that the infiltrators intended to carry out several bombings against public facilities and government establishments.

Informed sources also related another story about Jordanian- Syrian relations. They said that Syria is reducing Jordan's share of al-Yarmuk River water by 120 million cubic meters by building dams along the river.

The sources asserted that the Syrian authorities built new dams along al-Yarmuk River to prevent Jordan from using its water. This prompted Jordan to hold talks with Turkey on importing Turkish water through pipelines or by tankers. The sources also said that Syria did not abide by the Johnston agreement on water negotiations in the region. Syria, they added, also went back on plans to build al-Wahdah dam, which was proposed by the two countries to use the river's water.

Informed sources told SHIHAN that in a sudden development in the Jordanian-Syrian crisis, the Syrian Defense Companies, which acted against Jordan at the beginning of the 1980's and which are among the best trained military units in Syria, have resumed their activities in Jordan at the orders of senior Syrian officials.

Political observers told SHIHAN that Arab political circles began mediating efforts to defuse the crisis between Jordan and Syria and that Syria's refusal to improve relations is obstructing these efforts. On the eve of Talas' recent statements, Prime Minister al-Kabariti called for support for the peace process, pointing out that it needs all Arab efforts and the coordination called for by the Madrid conference and accepted by Syria itself. Al-Kabariti also called for dealing with the changes on the Israeli side, in terms of the results of the recent elections, in order to continue the peace process on all tracks, including the Syrian track. But Arab diplomats in Amman told SHIHAN that current Syrian policies will lead to more estrangement between Amman and Damascus and that it is necessary for the two leaders to meet to solve all outstanding problems between Jordan and Syria.

Lebanon: Buwayz Calls For New Arab Strategy After Likud Victory

NC1006172796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the convening of an expanded Arab summit in Cairo on 21 June, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said: We are facing a new Israeli reality based on Likud's traditional policies and firm positions on the Golan, Jerusalem, and the Palestinian issue. A new Arab strategy must therefore be devised. The Arab policy pursued over the past five years, especially since the Gulf war, must be reconsidered. The summit should discuss all these issues and seek to come up with a new position compatible with the new reality. Buwayz said the situation in southern Lebanon is a reflection of the tense regional climate.

Minister Buwayz decided to participate in the meeting of the foreign ministers of the European-Mediterranean Committee to be held in Rome on 17 June at the invitation of Italy, the current chairman of the European Union. A diplomatic source said the one-day meeting has no specific agenda. It is an open dialogue to discuss issues raised during the Barcelona European-Mediterranean meeting in October and to review what was agreed upon in that meeting. The discussions will also touch on Middle East issues and the European-Mediterranean dialogue in light of the recent Israeli elections.

Lebanon: Fadlallah Interviewed on Relations With Government

NC1006182096 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 7 Jun 96 p 3

[Interview with 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah by Ibrahim al-Amin and 'Imad Marmal; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [AL-SAFIR] [passage omitted] Do you believe that the resistance's view of its role and the government's view of the prospects for a solution [with Israel] permit the existence of a real and trustworthy dialogue between the resistance and the government ?

[Fadlallah] I believe it is very difficult to envisage a true and real dialogue between the government and the resistance for a very simple reason. Given the background of some of the government's political figures, the government's political line considers the resistance a problem it cannot solve under the current regional circumstances of which the resistance are part. The state does not believe in the resistance. This is because any state that believes in the resistance—such as the French resistance against Nazi occupation—must make an effort, any effort, to support and coordinate with the resistance. The government should not wait for the resistance to seek coordination and support. The government must seek such coordination by drawing up a plan for liberation. But this is not on the government's political agenda.

The resistance—all its factions, not just the Islamic Resistance—has imposed itself on the government, which has remained a spectator and has always criticized or expressed annoyance with the resistance. Therefore, it is very difficult for the government to coordinate with the resistance on a level that would preserve the resistance's activity and vitality. The government wants to bring the resistance into its sphere of influence, so it can ask the resistance to carry out an operation one day and not to carry it out the next day.

Therefore, I do not believe there is a real chance for a deep and objective dialogue between the government and the resistance that will enable the resistance to exercise its freedom within certain political limits. That is one thing. On the other hand, the government is not prepared to be caught red-handed by the international community participating in resistance activity. Naturally, any coordination will turn into government participation in one way or another. The government does not want this to happen because the cost of this might be war with Israel.

[AL-SAFIR] Do you believe that the state must participate directly in resistance operations, including military operations?

[Fadlallah] I do not believe that the state, which cannot enter into a war with Israel, can shoulder the military responsibility arising from the resistance operations. In principle, this is not on the state's mind and not on the mind of any Arab country. Therefore, the state cannot commit itself to any coordination with the resistance out of fear of the consequences that might arise from the resistance operations.

[AL-SAFIR] Some people accuse the "fundamentalist current" of lacking a national affiliation.

[Fadlallah] Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. I believe that the fundamentalists—and I do not agree with this term—are more nationalistic than others for a simple reason, namely because they reject global arrogance and Zionist arrogance and want their countries and people to be free. If the so-called fundamentalists are being blamed for having relations with Iran, for example, these fundamentalists do not want to bring Iran to Lebanon but do sympathize with Iran because they have things in common with it. Similarly, a segment of the Lebanese people sympathizes with Syria and another group sympathizes with France. [passage omitted]

[AL-SAFIR] Lebanese Government officials have publicly complained about Iran's behavior in Lebanon. They have also accused the resistance of becoming a stooge for Iran, which is being viewed as wanting to sideline the Lebanese state.

[Fadlallah] Perhaps the Lebanese state could have spoken about this during the insane war [between Iraq and Iran] when the revolutionary atmosphere in Iran did not pay any regard to state institutions. However, in the current political line of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward Lebanon we find that Iran has opened channels of communication with the Lebanese Government and has invited Lebanese Government officials to visit Iran to discuss bilateral relations. I believe there are prospects for economic and educational cooperation. I do not believe that Iran wants to sideline the Lebanese state. Some controversial remarks might have been made by Iranian officials. But controversial remarks have also been made by French, U.S., and Arab officials. So this does not mean that Iran must be singled out. We must also include the U.S. behavior, the occasional remarks by the U.S. ambassador, French behavior during the war between the "Lebanese Forces" and [Michel] 'Awn, and the behavior of some Arab countries.

I do not believe that Iran wants to sideline the Lebanese state. The Lebanese states does not possess any evidence in this regard. Regarding aid, I know that many countries have offered aid to segments of the population. The Lebanese state cannot accuse these countries of wanting to sideline it. If charitable Iranian societies have given aid to the Lebanese people or to Lebanese charitable societies, like the Construction Jihad [jihad al-bina'], this does not represent a sidelining of the Lebanese state.

In any case, even if some mistakes have occurred, we should not shout about them to give the impression that a serious problem is shaking the country. We know that the U.S. ambassador has spoken several times about the elections and other issues, but we have not heard the Lebanese state stridently complain about U.S. intervention in Lebanon. Neither has the Lebanese state tried to take away his diplomatic status.

I believe there is an exaggeration of the Iranian role. I want my country to be free and independent and to deal with Iran and other countries on the basis of protecting Lebanon's interests. I earnestly ask: What benefit has Iran derived from Lebanon, and what harm can be considered to have been done to Lebanon? I believe there is one thing, namely Iran's support for the resistance. Iran may support the resistance, but Syria also supports it. Why is Iranian support spoken about in a negative way and Syrian support not spoken about in a negative way? Matters must be discussed in a detailed and objective manner.

Some people say Iran wants a seat at the Middle East negotiations through Lebanon. We know that Iran rejects a settlement as a matter of principle. So how can it demand a seat at the negotiations? We do not believe that Iran is infallible. We do not say that it is a charitable country that does not want anything in return. But tell me what country does not try to benefit from its position in another state? [passage omitted]

[AL-SAFIR] Can we ask if you are pleased that Peres has lost the Israeli elections?

[Fadlallah] Maybe I am pleased because this man tried to deceive the Arab world that he was a man of peace. In fact, he was a man of war in its harshest forms. While campaigning for election during "Operation Grapes of Wrath" he said he had decided on this operation because he found his popularity in Israel was dropping. Therefore, this man had to be punished, regardless of who replaced him. I do not believe there is any difference between Peres and his friend [Netanyahu] for a very simple reason: Israel's political strategy of controlling Palestinian and Arab destiny and suppressing Arab aspirations does not change. Some Israelis want to kill 100 percent of us, while others only want to kill 99.99 percent of us. The strategy is fixed but tactics may change. [passage omitted]

[AL-SAFIR] Regardless of your principled stand on the negotiations, do you believe it is possible to reach a settlement with the Likud on the other deadlocked tracks of negotiations?

[Fadlallah] This should not be ruled out. It was the Likud that withdrew from Sinai. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah Official—Government Must End Israeli Violations

NC1006183496 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Report by correspondent 'Ali Nun from Beirut on 10 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Nun] [passage omitted] According to official Lebanese security sources, the Israeli shelling today was the most violent since the cease-fire in April.

The Hizballah leadership in Beirut also said that the shelling confirms the resistance's assertions that Israel does not abide by its commitment not to attack Lebanese villages and civilians.

[Shaykh Na'im Qasim] The Israeli shelling of a civilian vehicle between 'Arab Salim and Habbush, in which one person was killed and another injured, was an attack on civilians and therefore was a clear violation of the April understanding. An end must be put to these violations through contacts and through an initiative on the part of the Lebanese state to put an end to such repeated aggressions.

[Nun] Shaykh Na'im Qasim ruled out further developments in Israel's war operations in Lebanon as part of its pressures to generally cause confusion on the eve of the Arab summit to be held in Cairo on 21 June.

[Qasim] I don't believe that Israel wants to carry out some action specifically against the Arab summit. But the Israeli enemy might carry out a series of limited hostile actions at this time to prove its presence and possibly so it can impose conditions. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah Attacks Israeli APC; No Casualties Noted

NC1006142596 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1330 GMT 10 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The terrorists fired a Sagger rocket at an Israeli armored personnel carrier [APC] this afternoon. The attack, which occurred in the western sector of the border area, caused no casualties or material damage.

[Paris AFP in English at 1411 GMT on 10 June in a Beirut-datelined item, adds the following: "'One of our commando units attacked with light arms and antitank rockets at around 2:10 p.m. (1110 GMT) an Israeli army patrol made up of infantry and an M-113 troop transport on the Bra'shit road,' a Hizballah spokesman in Beirut told AFP.

["'Our fighters claimed several victims within the enemy ranks,' he said without giving further details.

["A security source confirmed the attack, but gave no indication of casualties, saying: 'A Hizballah unit fired a Sagger rocket on an Israeli position at Bra'shit.'"]

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Resume Attacks on South, Mock Raids

NC1006191296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in the south, Israeli attacks were resumed against the liberated areas, particularly Bra'shit this evening. Elsewhere, Israeli warplanes are conducting mock raids on al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Resistance announced the death of resistance fighter Bilal Mahmud al-Akhras, who was martyred during the operation carried out against an Israeli patrol on the 'Ali al-Tahir-al-Dabshah road early today. The operation left several Israeli soldiers dead or wounded.

Syria: Coup Against al-Asad Reportedly Foiled

JN1106100196 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic
12 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by the political editor: "Failed Coup Against Hafiz al-Asad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The destruction of 10 helicopters, the killing of 27 soldiers, and the wounding of dozens were the outcome of the failed coup attempt against Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. This attempt could have ended the 26-year-old tight Syrian rule.

Sources in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, revealed the details of the failed coup, which was carried out in coordination with Ankara and Tel Aviv and with the knowledge of Arab capitals. The sources said that, according to the plan, a number of Syrian helicopters would take off from a base near Aleppo to al-Qardahah, President al-Asad's birthplace, to destroy the Presidential Palace and to kill the president, his brother Rif'at, and his son Bashshar to end the more than two-and-a-half decades of rule by this Alawite family.

According to another part of the plan, military units affiliated with the 72d Division, which is stationed near Damascus, would control the radio and television stations. This would be simultaneous with the destruction of the Presidential Palace in al-Qardahah, after which the end of President al-Asad's rule would be announced and a state of emergency would be declared. The new regime would promise to hold general elections within six years.

Lebanese sources and Syrian opposition members in Athens said that the leaders of the failed coup were Sunni military commanders, who participated in the disengagement of forces talks in 1974 and held talks with Israel in the United States in the summer of 1995.

The sources added that Arab-Americans who have ties to the Israeli Mosad and the CIA successfully made contacts with these officers to learn about the Syrian military mentality and to see if it was possible to recruit for the CIA. The sources said that the CIA had unexpected success on this level and was also able to recruit ranking Syrian military commanders to carry out the coup.

The U.S. objectives of this coup attempt were not only confined to changing Syria's ruling structure, but also to making structural changes in regional alliances. Damascus, led by al-Asad, was able to skillfully play the Iranian card to pressure Turkey. Damascus also used its alliance with Egypt to pressure Tel Aviv. It was able to maintain strong friendship with Riyadh and benefit from its friendship with Iran. Therefore, Damascus, under the al-Asad-led team, was able to become the pivot of all regional formulas in a way that annoyed Washington, which was displeased to see Damascus inflicting diplomatic losses as a result of Operation Grapes of Wrath.

The first of these U.S. losses is that the United States appeared to be the ally of the party that lost in terms of diplomacy — Israel. Damascus appeared to be the ally of the victorious party — Hizballah, which succeeded in turning the summer 1993 verbal agreement with its Israeli enemies into a written agreement in the spring of 1996. The victory of the Likud Party, which has adopted an intransigent stand toward the withdrawal from the Golan Heights, also increased the feverish U.S. desire to see an end to al-Asad's regime. The Clinton administration, if it wins a new term, will have four difficult years of negotiations, something that the Democratic administration in Washington does not want.

The Syrian leadership is not the same since the failed coup attempt against al-Asad's regime, for the following reasons:

First, the failed attempt is a hard message from the United States to Damascus—to the effect that all the Middle East capitals cannot deviate from the rules of the U.S. game.

Second, peace with Israel is a matter of time. No capital is allowed to deviate from this script.

Third, al-Asad understands that the U.S. Administration is capable of recruiting Sunni military commanders in the Syrian Army. This means that al-Asad's leadership can be replaced.

Fourth, tangible practical steps should be taken with Israel before the U.S. elections in order to strengthen the U.S. Administration's position against the Republicans.

Damascus fully understands these messages. Syrian intelligence has studied the unbalanced democratic structure of top posts in the Syrian Government, a situation that the U.S. Administration has used.

Finally, the failed coup attempt against al-Asad conveyed a message to all Middle East leaders to the effect that the U.S. strategy is similar to one's fate and a divine decree from which one cannot escape.

Syria: 'Arab Sources' Claim Link Between Explosions, Coup Attempt

JN1106105496 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic
12 Jun 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab sources in Beirut said Syrian citizens' confidence in the security in their country was undermined after the Alawite state was rocked by six major explosions in several areas. These explosion were aimed at destabilizing the Syrian regime.

The sources said the explosions were the start of a coup attempt that was foiled before it could be implemented. They added that the perpetrators of this attempt were members of secret Sunni cells in the Syrian Army. The cells want to topple the regime in Syria, in accordance with a U.S. scheme.

The sources said the coup attempt was accompanied by feverish intelligence activities in Lebanon and the arrival of many CIA agents. These agents studied the political situation in case the coup was successful and made political and media preparations for the coup by recruiting more than 10 press crews that were ready to report news of the coup's success to the world and the region.

The sources said the agents who came to Beirut had sophisticated monitoring equipment to observe the movements of units of the Alawite-controlled Syrian Army and to monitor the Syrian Defense Squads, whose members are President Hafiz al-Asad's strongmen.

Syria: Iran's Velayati Calls For 'Extraordinary' Islamic Summit

JN1006143596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, from where the call for an Arab summit was made, also called for convening an Islamic summit, following the Syrian president's meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who handed a message to President Hafiz al-Asad from Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Velayati responded to questions from correspondent Thana' al-Imam, including one on calling for an Islamic summit. He said:

[Begin recording] [Velayati, in English] I think there is a chance that we have to test it, and we have to ask the secretary general of the OIC to try about an extraordinary meeting.

[Al-Imam] Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati stressed the need to hold an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the Islamic states. Responding to questions by Radio Monte Carlo, Velayati said that convening an Islamic summit is an opportunity that should be tested and that it is necessary to discuss the issue with the secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Conference to arrange for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the developments that have taken place in the region over recent weeks.

Velayati also said that the main theme of Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's message to President al-Asad centers on Iran's total support for Syria and the Arab countries in their conflict with Israel.

Referring to Bahrain, Velayati added that the problems of the region should be solved through consultations among the region's states themselves. He said that the paragraph in the Damascus final statement indicating the three states' support for Bahrain in its fight against terrorism and foreign interference, falls within the realm of discussions on the internal problem between the Bahraini Government and opposition, and that this problem should be solved through peaceful means between the two sides, as called for by the final statement—a solution which is in line with the Iranian viewpoint.

Velayati asserted to Radio Monte Carlo that the tripartite summit is an important initial step, which Iran supports just as it supports any other similar Arab meeting.

Before leaving Damascus, Velayati told SANA that at a time when tension in southern Lebanon is increasing, Iran supports the struggle of the Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian peoples to liberate their lands, noting that there is no difference between the Likud and the Labor Party. [end recording]

Syria: Iranian Foreign Minister Comments on Talks, Israeli Likud

JN1006151596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his accompanying delegation left Damascus this morning at the end of their visit to Syria.

He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs; ranking Foreign Ministry officials; the Iranian ambassador in Damascus; and the Embassy staff.

Dr. Velayati described his talks with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad as constructive and useful. He said that viewpoints on various bilateral and regional issues were exchanged. In a statement to a SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, correspondent he said: I conveyed a message to His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad from President Hashemi-Rafsanjani as part of the constant and long-standing consultations between the two countries and bilateral relations.

He added that the talks aim at ensuring the stability of the region and continuing regional cooperation among Arab and Islamic countries. Velayati said that his country supports the struggle for liberating the occupied Arab territories, regaining the rights of the Palestinian people, and liberating southern Lebanon and the Golan from the Israeli occupation.

Asked about the differences between the Israeli Likud and Labor Parties, he said that there is no difference between the two parties in terms of the strategic dimension, because their platforms are against the interests of the countries of the region and the Palestinians. He noted that the two parties continued their occupation of Arab land, whether in Palestine, Lebanon, or Syria.

Syria: Al-Shar' Says Israel Deceiving Arabs, World

NC1006213496 London MBC Television in Arabic 2100 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' stressed today that the land-for-peace principle is the basis of any settlement with Israel. In an exclusive interview conducted by our correspondent Nur-al-Din al-Faridi in Luxembourg, he said what is happening in Israel now is nothing but deception. He said Israel's peace-for-peace proposal is nothing but words. Here is a report by our correspondent in Luxembourg Nur-al-Din al-Faridi:

[Begin recording] [al-Faridi] The dangers that the political changes in Israel pose to the peace process, Arab efforts to curb these dangers, and the need for European support are central issues in the warm Syrian-European meetings here in Luxembourg. While the Europeans are these days giving Binyamin Netanyahu the benefit of the doubt, the Arab sides are calling on Europe not to be deceived by Israel's talk of peace for peace, as mentioned by the statement of the three-way Arab summit in Damascus.

[Al-Shar'] The principle of land for peace is the basis. Talk of peace for peace will not be accepted by the Arabs, and will deceive none of them. I believe what is happening in Israel now seeks to deceive and mislead the Arabs and world public opinion.

[Al-Faridi] The Europeans prefer to wait and give the Israeli prime minister-elect a chance to form his government and issue his expected statement about the peaceful solution. [passage omitted]

[Al-Shar'] We believe that those who rushed toward Israel have now, on their own, started to curb the steps toward normalization with Israel. I believe they did the right thing by taking these precautions. This helps all the Arabs achieve peace and gives a message to the Israelis that the Arabs are serious in adhering to their rights and in regaining their occupied territories.

[Al-Faridi] The Syrian-French talks also dealt with the continuous tension in the occupied Lebanese border strip as Israel and the United States continue to obstruct the formation of the security monitoring committee mentioned in the April understanding. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Syria: Radio—Netanyahu Policy May Bring Back Confrontation

JN1006161296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1142 GMT 10 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Damascus summit, which brought together Presidents Hafiz al-Asad, Muhammad Husni Mubarak and His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, is extremely important. The summit emphasized the strong relations linking Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in the various aspects of conflict with Israel. What is even more important is that the three leaders made an identical assessment of the danger looming on the horizon of the Arab future. The expected Israeli policy, as announced by Binyamin Netanyahu, represents a challenge that may bring back confrontation and turn over the page of peace — which was urged by the resolutions of international legitimacy and whose foundations were delineated by the U.S. initiative, which stipulated an inviolable condition, the implementation of which is the only way to peace.

Hence, it was agreed on the need to call an Arab summit that will shoulder its responsibility toward facing the possible future dangers which we should not overlook or let them take us by surprise. We should be ready to deal with these dangers, regardless of their nature. For the sake of a radical and comprehensive confrontation of the objectives of the Israel policy for the upcoming years which have been exposed, there is no alternative to an Arab position based on a fundamental rule represented in employing the energies of the region and pooling its capabilities and resources.

Fully aware of the historic responsibility and the objective realities, we say that the future of the Arab-Israeli conflict is primarily contingent on the common conviction of the unity of destiny. This conviction necessitates the existence of a relationship among all Arab countries in the various political and nonpolitical fields. It goes without saying that the danger posed by Israel, as manifested in its declared strategy, is a danger that threatens all Arabs and lurks behind every Arab door. Whoever thinks that Israel's danger is away from him deceives himself, indeed, and makes his country prone to uncertainties. No Arab country, whether close to or far from Israel, is outside the range of the Zionist expansionist ambitions or far from Israel's constant attempts to place it under its influence, hegemony, and control and make it a satellite revolving in its orbit.

The Israeli ambitions in the Arab world have no limit. With much disregard, arrogance, and haughtiness, Binyamin Netanyahu announced his commitment to these ambitions. He said that he adheres to creating Greater Israel as sought by the pioneer Zionists—Greater Israel that extends from the Nile to the Euphrates and whose influence is expanded to tighten the grip on the Arab destinies and resources and manipulate their life, future, and destiny.

There is no doubt that the Arab nation, from the [Atlantic] Ocean to the [Arabian] Gulf, looks forward to the imminent summit in Cairo in the hope that the Arab leaders will manage to work out a unified strategy that will rise up to the challenges. Such a strategy should pool energies and resources to face these challenges regardless of their whereabouts. It is about time to place the decisive Arab conflict with the Israeli enemy at the top of priorities. It is high time to remove the secondary differences that used to surface. This means that all loopholes should be closed and the active Arab presence be boosted to face up to the developments and events that may be imposed during the Likud's reign.

At any rate, it should be recalled that Israel's ambitions have never been realized and will never be realized in the future. They may be realized in the future only if the Arab ranks are cracked. So, we hope that the forthcoming summit, which was prepared for and called by the Damascus summit, will usher in an extremely solid Arab position that is capable of earning world respect, deterring Israel, and convincing it that the only way to ensure its security is through its readiness to adhere to the foundations and ingredients of a genuine and just peace. Its security is wholly related to the return of land and rights to their owners.

Syria: TISHRIN Apprehensive About Netanyahu Policy

JN0806113096 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0840 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Jun (SANA) — In the "An Opinion" column today, the newspaper TISHRIN says that settlement is one of the major hallmarks of the Israeli right wing, which will come to power in Israel with Binyamin Netanyahu's victory on 29 May.

The paper adds: Settlement construction entails expansion, racism, and provocation. Since the announcement of the election results, settlers have begun a wave of expansion in Jerusalem, Hebron, and other Palestinian cities and villages.

The paper believes that settlers constitute a second army or a terrorist militia, for they are armed and receive weapons training. They conduct patrols and open fire on Arabs, just as the army is doing. With regard to the use of firearms against Arabs, settlers receive the same privileges accorded to military personnel.

The paper adds: These Israeli practices will destroy all opportunities for peace and move the peace process unleashed in Madrid five years ago back to square one. This will happen if these Israeli practices do not suffer a severe setback.

The paper adds: In the aftermath of the downfall of his government, Yitzhaq Shamir, former Likud leader and Israeli prime minister, said he was planning to drag his feet in the peace talks to preclude progress. He added: "We were conducting negotiations for the sake of negotiations, and not to achieve peace."

The paper concludes by saying: All indications are that the upcoming Netanyahu government will pursue the same policy Shamir pursued. The evidence is that Netanyahu and Shamir have met more than once on the sidelines of the efforts to form a new cabinet and draft its program since the announcement of the election results.

Syria: Press Highlights Importance of Damascus, Cairo Summits

JN1106075796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0453 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH comments on the results of the Damascus tripartite summit and its final statement. The Damascus summit restored great hope to the masses of our nation, who are now waiting for the Cairo summit. AL-BA'TH says: It is still premature to jump to conclusions or assess the results of the expanded Arab summit.

AL-BA'TH adds: Developments in the region, the Arab collapse and fragmentation during previous stages, and the Likud's assumption of power in Israel necessitate reconsideration of calculations and require that the Arabs adopt a stand to fortify their existence against the dangers posed to it.

The paper explains: The positive atmosphere that has started to prevail in the Arab world, particularly since the Damascus summit and preparations for the Cairo summit, is accompanied by a state of confusion in Israel immediately after it sensed an attempt to reactivate Arab solidarity and to close ranks to confront the Likud's rejection of the bases of peace and the principles of the Madrid conference.

AL-BA'TH says: Binyamin Netanyahu has not shown any intention toward the peace process other than his adoption of the peace-for-peace principle. This is an attempt to torpedo the Madrid formula, which is based on the land-for-peace principle.

The paper concludes: If the Damascus statement stressed the principle of a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option, the Cairo summit will not call for anything short of this demand, which holds Israel responsible for its rejection of a just and comprehensive peace.

Commenting on the same subject under the headline "Reviving the Arab Situation," the newspaper TISHRIN says: President Hafiz al-Asad's statements at a joint news conference with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak in Cairo before the Damascus summit prove that Syria has always supported any Arab meeting, whether a meeting of the cordon states or of all Arab states.

TISHRIN expresses the belief that the call for the summit is the only way to put the Arab house in order, defend Arab rights, regain the usurped land, and protect the Arab nation's higher interests in accordance with the international legitimacy. The paper warns that the continued fragmentation of the Arab situation will lead to further dangers.

TISHRIN explains: The Damascus summit and the upcoming Cairo summit prove the serious pan-Arab approach of Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia to correct the situation, reunite the Arabs, and achieve solidarity.

TISHRIN concludes: The common Arab destiny necessitates that all Arab sides deal with the developments with a high sense of pan-Arab responsibility. Every Arab also should have a sincere desire to finalize a unified stand and achieve effective Arab solidarity.

Syria: Press Hails Outcome of Damascus Tripartite Summit

JN0906100096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 9 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Toward the Reactivation of Arab Solidarity," the newspaper TISHRIN says: The Arab summit held in Damascus between President al-Asad, President Mubarak, and Prince 'Abdallah attracted international attention in view of the important results it could produce to remedy the Arab state of affairs, achieve a forceful Arab solidarity, and close Arab ranks so that Arabs can face up to any challenges. As a matter of fact, the sincere efforts made by the three leaders produced a call for convening an Arab summit in Cairo to reunite Arabs and reestablish joint Arab action on firm bases so that the Arab nation can overcome the current crisis, tackle its disputes, and give due attention to basic issues, chief among which are Arab rights, the restoration of occupied Arab territories, and Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders, in the context of a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, the terms of reference agreed upon at the Madrid conference, and the principle of exchanging territory for peace.

The paper adds: The Damascus summiteers emphasized their countries' commitment to just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option. They held Israel responsible for the consequences of any reneging on the bases of the peace process. The final statement issued by the summit stresses that Israel must withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, Jerusalem, and southern Lebanon. Moreover, the statement calls for enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate national rights. The statement emphasizes that the international community must follow through on the peace process. It also emphasizes that the three leaders have faith in the Arab nation's competence and ability to defend its rights.

The paper goes on to say: This pan-Arab attempt to close ranks and revive solidarity has been the demand and wish of all Arabs throughout the Arab homeland for a long time, but Israel has frustrated the efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace for the past four years. Worse still, Israel is currently articulating brazenly hostile positions that conflict with the most basic requirements of peace.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: The Damascus summit was held to bring things back to normal by calling for an expanded summit that will rehabilitate Arab unity and solidarity and put an end to the enemies' defiance.

The newspaper AL-THAWRAH addresses the same issue. Under the headline "The Summit of Pan-Arab Decisions," the paper says: The tripartite Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit Damascus hosted over the past two days expressed the three countries' commitment to just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option. The joint statement issued by the summit of pan-Arab decision-making indicates that the only way to achieve peace is through an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and all other occupied Arab territories, chief among which is Arab Jerusalem.

The paper adds: The statement issued by the Damascus summit holds Israel fully responsible for the consequences of any reneging of the bases of the peace process, or going back on the commitments and pledges agreed upon. In this regard, the statement says that an Israeli reneging of the bases of peace would add impetus to the whirlpool of tension and violence in the region.

The paper commends the Damascus summit, which is a key component of Arab efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere and achieve solidarity. The paper adds: The three summiteers decided to make persistent efforts to close Arab ranks and rebuild Arab solidarity so as to safeguard joint pan-Arab security and protect the higher interests of the Arab nation on the basis of international legitimacy.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Hence, we see the importance of the Damascus summit in advancing joint Arab action and rehabilitating solidarity, which is indispensable. Thus, the Damascus summit can be called the summit of pan-Arab decisions.

The newspaper AL-BA'TH addresses the same issue, saying: The summiteers underlined their commitment to just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option. The only way to achieve peace lies in an Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders, from southern Lebanon, and from the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

Under the headline "The Summit That Underlined Constants," the newspaper adds: Throughout its contemporary history, the Arab nation has not faced challenges and dangers like those it is currently experiencing. It is suffering from divisions, disunity, and dangers threatening its rights and dignity. Hence, the serious and forceful moves made by influential powers in our Arab homeland, headed by Syria under His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, occurs at a time when the Arab nation badly needs to do some soul-searching to put the Arab house in order so as to bring about an awakening of the nation and a closure of its ranks on the one hand and halt deterioration and apathy and curb our enemy's belligerence and cut it down to size on the other.

The paper goes on to say: The call from Damascus to convene an Arab summit in Cairo on 21 June reflects a badly needed Arab awakening. This call was meant to revitalize the nation's spirit and hope before this nation crumbles under the heavy weight of the ferocious Zionist onslaught targeting it. The tripartite Damascus summit declared that our nation is still in good shape, and capable of overcoming the pernicious dangers facing it. Moreover, it is capable of making preparations needed to defend its causes and just and legitimate rights.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: The Damascus summit underscored the Syrian constants, chief among which are the liberation of territories and the restoration by the Arab nation of its rights, which is conducive to a just and comprehensive peace that will return all rights to their lawful owners.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: General Dostam Establishes Own Airline

LD1106084196 Tehran IRNA in English 0719 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, June 11, IRNA — Afghan warlord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam has reportedly established his own Balkh airline inducting five planes recently purchased from Russia, Britain and Uzbekistan to compete with the country's official airline the Arian Afghan.

The airline will soon start operating passenger and cargo flights from Mazar-e Sharif, General Dostam's stronghold in northern Afghanistan, to Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian republics, reported an English [language] daily 'THE MUSLIM' Tuesday. [11 June]

With the establishment of Balkh Airline including cargo flights, General Dostam is likely to recover from the acute financial crises suffered by him due to non-transportation of goods between Mazar-e Sharif and Kabul and parts of Afghanistan, the report added.

General Dostam's National Movement party source in Islamabad said that the airline would soon start its operation and function under the international aviation rules.

Afghanistan: Transport of Food to Kabul Continues, Fighting Resumes

LD1106101396 Tehran IRNA in English 0923 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, June 11, IRNA — Fifty tons of cooking oil arrived here Monday [10 June] in continuation of the transfer of foodstuffs to Kabul from areas under the control of General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the National Islamic Movement. The foodstuffs were transported by the International Red Cross Society (IRCS) on several trucks, through the Salang highway in Baghlan Province, and following the agreements of General Dostam and the commander of the Afghan armed forces, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud. The highway, which links the Afghan capital to the north of the country and to central Asia, has been closed since 1993. It was also dangerous to use the highway because of the land mines. Over 130 tons of foodstuffs in three consignments have been dispatched to the area so far.

Meanwhile, after ten days of relative calm in war fronts in southern and southwestern areas of Kabul, the exchange of heavy fire resumed Monday afternoon between government and Taleban forces. Explosions were heard in the city as the two sides fiercely pounded each other's positions. Chahar Asiab, Rish Khvor, Sang Nebeshte, Gol Baq and Kheirabad, in the vicinity of the Afghan capital, were scenes of fighting for more than three hours. Military sources in the government said that some Taleban installations were targeted. However, there was no report on human casualties and financial losses.

Another report indicated that government forces and their allies attacked Taleban positions in Meydan Shahr, Vardak Province.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Stage Set for Parliamentary Elections 12 Jun

BK1106074596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 0100 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The nation goes to the polls tomorrow with great interest and enthusiasm to elect members to the 300-seat parliament. Polling will begin at 0800 and continue till 1600. This is the second time since 1991 that general elections are being held in Bangladesh under a caretaker government. A total of 2,574 candidates from different political parties and independent candidates are contesting in the elections. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Awami League, and Jamaat-i-Islami have each fielded candidates for all the 300 seats. Jatiya Party has nominated candidates for 294 seats. Zaker Party has nominated 249 candidates, Islami Okiya Jote [figure indistinct] candidates, Gano Forum 105, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-Rab 68, [name indistinct] 67, Freedom Party 55, Khelafat Andolon 48, Workers Party 24, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-Khaleq candidates for 30 seats. A total of over 56.70 million voters will exercise their right of franchise.

The Election Commission has finalized all preparations for a smooth and fair election. Ballot boxes and papers, and other election materials have already been sent to all the polling centers throughout the country. The Election Commission has set up about 26,000 polling centers and 114,749 polling booths in the country. Also, about 400,000 election officials have been appointed. Over 400,000 members of the police, Bangladesh Rifles, and paramilitary forces will be deployed on election day to maintain law and order. A total of 40,550 members of the Armed Forces will also be deployed to assist the civil administration.

The Election Commission has also made elaborate arrangements to collect and announce the election results as early as possible. Election results will be announced directly from the commission's office. Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television have set up separate booths in the secretariat of the Election Commission for this. Radio Bangladesh will start a 45-hour-long program from 0600 tomorrow to broadcast election news.

Meanwwhile, several foreign observer groups and a large number of journalists have arrived in Bangladesh to monitor and gather election news. The foreign observers group include the Commonwealth observers group, [name indistinct], private SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] observers group, and [name indistinct]. Election observers from Canada, Japan, Cambodia, Iran, Norway, Sweden, Philippines, and Denmark will observe the elections in different parts of the country. Apart from them, the Dhaka-based [name indistinct] will also observe the elections.

The Bangladesh Postal Department will issue a special five-taka stamp tomorrow on the occasion. In accordance with the provisions of the People's Representation Order of 1972, the Election Commission has imposed a ban on all types of meetings and processions from midnight yesterday. It will remain in force until midnight tomorrow. A press release issued by the Election Commission said during this period no one can call a meeting or organize a procession, and no one is allowed to attend such meetings or processions in any constituency. No one will be allowed to indulge in terrorist activities or display irresponsible behavior, or to terrorize any voter or election official, or display his weapons or physical strength. On election day, no one will be allowed to campaign within 400 yards distance of any polling center or appeal for votes or to ask any one not to vote in elections or [words indistinct]. The government has imposed a ban on the movement of motorcycles, microbuses, and jeeps from 1800 hours today to 0600 hours on 13 June. The Election Commission has requested the concerned authorities to exempt the vehicles of diplomatic missions, UN organizations, and nongovernment organizations from this ban.

A meeting of the advisory committee on law and order held in Dhaka yesterday reviewed the latest law and order situation in the country. The meeting presided over by Dr. Manzoor Elahi, adviser, discussed in detail the measures taken by the Election Commission to maintain law and order before and during the elections. The committee emphasized the need to maintain neutrality during the elections and gave importance to the role of the members of the law enforcing agencies here. It expressed the hope that they will be able to exercise the responsibility entrusted on them with utmost dedication and sincerity. Later, the committee members went to the police headquarters in the capital to see the illegal arms that have been recovered so far.

Bangladesh: Election Commission Imposes Ban on Election Campaigns

BK1006081396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 0100 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The election campaign ends at midnight today. A press release issued by the Election Commission yesterday said that a 24-hour [as heard] ban on election meetings, rallies, and processions goes into effect at midnight tonight and will remain until 12 June at midnight. Meanwhile, political parties and candidates have intensified their last moment efforts to win the support of the voters. The entire country has been decorated with posters with photos of candidates and attractive slogans. Candidates are meeting the voters and seeking their support for the 12 June elections. Independent foreign observers have also arrived in the country to monitor the upcoming elections. In addition to this, media representatives of different countries and foreign diplomats will also monitor the elections.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena said that the Election Commission has welcomed local and foreign observers to monitor the election activities in order to ensure the smooth holding of the elections. The chief election commissioner said this while briefing foreign observers in Dhaka yesterday. Referring to the formation of the caretaker government, Abu Hena said that the most important task of the caretaker government is to hold free and impartial elections to reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people. He said there is no alternative to democracy and added that good administration ensures rule of law. He said in our society democracy has [words indistinct]. Referring to the current atmosphere of the election campaign, the chief election commissioner said that there is a lot of interest and enthusiasm among the people regarding the 12 June elections.

Bangladesh: Police Arrest Over 33,000 People Since Apr

BK1006083796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Members of the police force have so far recovered about 4,200 illegal arms and over (?11,500) explosives since the first of April. They have also rounded up over 33,000 people on different charges, including 1,300 for keeping illegal arms and explosives. Police also recovered since yesterday morning [word indistinct] 91 illegal arms and over 1,500 explosives. They also arrested 18 people on charges of keeping illegal arms and explosives.

India

India: BJP Leader Advani Interviewed on Government and Future

BK0806143596 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 7 Jun 96 pp 8,9

['Exclusive' Interview With Bharatiya Janata Party leader L. K. Advani by correspondent M.J. Akbar; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Q. Why did you accept the invitation to form a government when you knew you did not have a majority and knew you could not create one?

A. There were two opinions in the party on whether to assume office or not. We could easily have taken the stand that we needed a clear majority in order to implement our manifesto. The people have not given us that. The people have certainly enabled us to outbeat all other parties to emerge as the largest party in the Lok Sabha, a significant achievement in itself. But there was a feeling that with these numbers we would not be able to form the kind of government we want, and we should bide our time and prefer to be in the Opposition. After all, even Rajiv, who had the largest single party in 1991, did not form a government. We felt that there were two basic differences. Number one, in the case of Rajiv, he was a government party, and his strength being reduced from over 400 to 194 represented a rejection of the Congress; but in this case it was a mandate for us. Those who have voted for us, voted for us to be in the government.

Q. Yes, but not enough voted. And that way, whoever votes for any party votes for it to be in power, not to lose.

A. Yes, true. But in this case, the electorate voted us as the largest single party and collectively also brought down the Congress party from its perch down to 138 or whatever it is...So...because of some utterances made particularly by the two Tamil Nadu parties, that the BJP is not an untouchable, that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] option is open for us...

Q. Did Mr Moopanar and Mr Chidambaram also say that you were not untouchable?

A. Chidambaram said it. Not Moopanar; Chidambaram said, BJP option is open. He said that. Karunanidhi said the BJP is not an untouchable.

Q. Karunanidhi I had read about, but Chidambaram ?

A. (Smiles) Chidambaram was the first to say it. Aur maine bhi jab unse baat ki, to kaha ke aa kar ke baat kar lo... (And when I spoke to them, they said yes, come, let us have a conversation).

Q. Did you speak to them ?

A. I spoke to them. I remember. I was in Madras that day... I spoke to them.

Q. Didn't your party remind them of this when they were castigating you for communalism during the debate in Parliament?

A. (Smiles, brushes away the question) ...In these 10-11 days the impression that has lasted for years that our party can never enter government has been broken; and the impression has been strengthened that the BJP is a responsible, democratic party, which can communicate a sense of responsibility.

Q. Yes, but how could you go into power knowing full well that you would not survive?

A. Not full well... Only knowing full well that it is not easy to muster a full majority.

Q. Whose support did you expect, apart from the two Tamil parties?

A. If the two of these had agreed then we felt that the TDP [Telugu Desam Party] (of Andhra Pradesh) would have come with us. Akalis also: at that time the Akalis were not with us. Then AGP [Asom Gana Parishad] also. These were the five regional groups which we targeted. Of these only Akalis came along with us. The Akalis were not with us during the elections.

Q. Why did the Akalis go with you?

A. Akalis came along with us because, even though they were not with us in Punjab, (they saw that) in the rest of the country almost all the Sikhs voted for us. Akalis feel that they represent not only the Punjab region but they represent the thinking of the entire Sikh community in the country and from that angle the BJP (was a natural ally).

Q. Did you expect any section to split within the Congress and support you?

A. No, we did not expect a split in the Congress but we sensed the dissatisfaction of a sizable section of Congress MPs against the possibility of a National Front-Left Front [NF-LF] government coming to power. And on that account, kuch log hamse keh rake the ki bhai hum koshish kar rake hain ki hamari party virodh kare (some people were telling us that they were trying to see that the Congress opposes the NF-LF).

Q. So you think if Jyoti Basu had been made the Prime Minister by the United Front, as was originally conceived, the chances of you having got the majority would have been higher?

A. I do not say that because at every point of time even when individual Congressmen were saying ki bahut galat ho raha hai (something very wrong is happening) whether in Bengal or Orissa or Andhra or Tamil Nadu or Kerala, woh sab sehmat rehte hue bhi decision na le sake. Unho ne kissi stage par bhi yeh nahin indicate kiya ki woh koi BJP ki government ko chalne de (they could not take a final decision against the NF-LF. And not once did they indicate that they would support a BJP government.)

Q. That, of course, was there.

A. That is why I feel that if Jyoti Basu had become leader (the Congress) leadership itself would have thought differently. Today the leadership feels that this (the Deve Gowda) government will act, behave (as they want). An expectation that may not come through. (Laughs) No PM does.

Q. Yes. Except in the first week.

A. That we shall see. Aisa impression milta hai (That is the impression one gets).

Q. Did you expect that if Jyoti Basu had become the Prime Minister or had been nominated the leader, that a section of the Congress would have found him less acceptable to itself than the BJP?

A. I don't know.

Q. You've been saying things about what the Congress was feeling. How do you know what the Congress was feeling ?

A. From what they were telling me; jo idhar udhar intermediary chalte rehte the bahut sare (through the many intermediaries wandering around)...

Q. Who are these intermediaries? It wouldn't be a brahmin general secretary of the Congress, would it?

A. (Laughs) No. In my case I will be referring to very few people. Lekin jo log Parliament mein the unse to log bahut milte rehte hain (But those who were in Parliament, they would keep meeting a lot of people)...

Q. Central Hall.

A. Central hall ki lobby hai, wahan par to koi dikkat hi nahin hai. Yahan (to my home) par to koi aayega to woh notice hota hai immediately. Jo aata hai mere paas to woh do teen din baad, chhey din baad to phir woh batata hai ki kisee ne mujhe poochha kya karne aaye wahan par (In the Central Hall lobby there is no problem. But if anyone comes here, to my home, to see me then, two or three days later, or six days later, he is asked why he dropped by here).

Q. Does the Prime Minister keep a watch on who comes to meet you?

A. Those who are blessed with security, every movement of theirs is recorded.

Q. Koi faraq to nahin parta hai (It doesn't make any difference, does it)?

A. Koi nahin, mujhe to nahin (Not at all, at least not to me).

Q. If you go back to the BJP government, it seems that your whole purpose was to present a public relations exercise but have you actually calculated the cost of what you've done ?

A. Today, after the goodwill we have been given, it may seem to be a public stunt or a public relations exercise but that was not the intention. Our initial hesitation was in fact also because of this. Tomorrow, someone could make this charge against the BJP. One argument against assuming office was that we have scored a victory in the elections. It is a victory. The fact that it was not a clear majority and only the single largest party, doesn't deflect from the fact that electorally we have won. And we would be converting this victory into a defeat, when we fail to muster a majority in the Lok Sabha.

Q. After coming to power, all the ministers in the BJP started behaving as if they would stay in power for five years; they were making policy decisions at press conferences?

A. Kisi ke man mein yeh illusion nahin tha ki yeh nischit hai ki jeet jayenge (No one had the illusion that victory and survival were definite).

Q. The finance minister took two major decisions: (1) action against Reliance; (2) clearing Enron.

A. On Enron, I haven't enquired from him (finance minister Jaswant Singh) or the Maharashtra government but from what I gather it was the Maharashtra government's decision that we would have had to shell out a huge sum of money if we didn't take a decision soon.

Q. But surely any central government would have taken that into consideration?

A. Yes, but delaying that would have meant....

Q. The perception is that you are doing a favour to a company that had been targeted in the Maharashtra elections?

A. After having targeted we have also renegotiated the deal.

Q. Surely in politics you understand the value of perception ?

A. Yes, we do. In fact, it was not the question of perception that was criticised. It was the question whether the government was able to secure the confidence vote. It was propriety, not perception.

Q. Did Mr Narasimha Rao ask and get any support from you five years ago when he had a minority government? And did you expect anything out of that support?

A. No. He did not ask for our support nor did we seek any, except in the matter of the deputy speaker. That was the time when there was a give and take because (of the peculiar situation created by a minority government). Earlier, the Speakership went to the ruling party but the deputy Speakership was invariably given to some ally of the Congress. It was only this time since they did not get a clear majority, they sought our support. I remember that on the occasion also they were very reluctant to deal (with us) openly. They wanted us to support them without their declaring that they will support us in return and insisting that there were 15 more days to go for the elections of the Speaker. 'I am giving a solemn commitment to this idea but don't make that public today,' Rao said. At that stage it was Sharad Pawar who ensured that (things went smoothly)

Q. Would you describe that as normal Congress hypocritical politics?

A. No, I would not call it hypocritical politics because some other party would have also done it. It is only in the case of BJP alone, that this attitude always emerges — and the principal consideration becomes association with the BJP. Even a right cause is supposed to be wrong because (any association with the BJP) would affect the Muslim vote bank. Unfortunately it is true.

Q. Was Sharad Pawar worried about the Muslim vote bank?

A. No, Sharad Pawar is not. At one point of time (during the discussions on the Speaker issue in 1991) we kept saying it won't happen. And then Pawar took Rao inside for a discussion and when he came back he agreed. Then we gave a public statement that we are supporting the Congress nominee for Speaker because they agreed to our candidate. (Smiles) In the course of earlier negotiations, one name suggested was that of Mr Antulay.

Q. And Sharad Pawar agreed (to Antulay) ?

A. No, he didn't. He was not there when the proposal came from the government and when he came to know about it, he was unhappy.

Q. You didn't contact Pawar for support to the BJP government this time ?

A. I did not, though some of my colleagues in Parliament did. But he was in a way, among the Congressmen leading the move towards supporting an NF-LF government and did not want the BJP to continue.

Q. Do you agree with the speculation that Sharad Pawar could split the Congress and carry off MPs to become Deputy Prime Minister in a Deve Gowda government?

A. As I said, I regard Congressmen as the biggest destabilisation factor for the government.

Q. And destabilise the Congress too?

A. Even the Congress. In that process they may destabilise the Congress also. But, if the Congress as a whole joins the government then it is a different game altogether. They may become a dominant partner in this government.

Q. That will be a united Congress defacto?

A. It will not be just united Congress; there will be the CPI [Communist Party of India] there and so many parties.

Q. The Congress had the CPI's support in the famous days when you were in jail, the Emergency.

A. Since then, the CPI has been slightly changed.

Q. So has the Congress?

A. All possibilities are there, but the basic situation is a radical metamorphosis of the political scenario. We have, in the last 50 years, had a single party ruling in the country and a fragmented Opposition confronting that ruling party. Today it is a multi-party fragmented government ruling the country, confronted by a single Opposition party. The entire Opposition stakes have been practically left for the BJP which I think would be to our great advantage.

Q. Yet, in a sense, if you look historically, that is not surprising because the Opposition, by and large, was nothing but fragments of the Congress? From 1949-50 to 1996 the Opposition has been growing through the fragmentation of the Congress.

A. They may be fragments of the Congress but combined with the regional parties, with the BJP, [Janata] Dal or the CPI it becomes a large Opposition. And those who were fragments of the Congress party sometimes were more bitter with the Congress than with anyone of us.

Q. They were bitter with Congress-leadership, not with the party's philosophy.

A. By that token even the Communists or Socialists have been at one point of time a part of the Congress movement, but as Opposition they lost the Congress character.

Q. Those shifts are bound to take place in the evolution of politics.

A. But, today it is the entire section of Opposition parties, regional parties and the Congress which has become a part of the establishment. And the whole of the anti-establishment space is occupied by the BJP.

Q. Do you think this will have an important impact in a state like Bengal ?

A. Certainly! In every state.

Q. With the CPM's association with the Congress...

A. It will hurt (the CPM) badly. One factor for the decline in the CPI over the years has been its association with the establishment. The CPM was able to occupy the entire movement because of this. Otherwise the CPM was not that powerful in the initial stages.

Q. Do you think that in the next elections in Bengal you will be the number two party.

A. It is too early to predict but the possibility is there.

Q. What impact has BJP has on Indian politics and on Indian political formation ?

A. One thing I would say is that we have made ideology a relevant subject in electoral debate which was not so earlier as the entire polarisation was on the basis of Congress and anti Congress. Because Congress and anti-Congress simply meant the political haves and the havenots. There was no ideological or even programmatic dimension to the electoral debate. The biggest single achievement of the BJP has been the impact of this. People are also influenced by this dimension. Not that this becomes the only impact. After all there are so many factors. And certainly, we have tried to emphasise that probity in public life should be respected.

Q. Yes, but that last is a sort of tired dream.

A. It's a tired dream because it is difficult. Because the kind of climate that has the been generated, the permissiveness and all that, that must make it seem tired.

Q. You have been talking, before the elections, of a BJP wave. The wave never really occurred, did it? The wave got curtailed in Rajasthan and Gujarat which are states run by you. It did not actually convert itself into the kind of sweep in UP that you might have been wanting.

A. Sweep, yes we did not get it. But if it were not for the wave we would not have got 52 seats in a state where we were 51 already (Uttar Pradesh).

Q. Yes, but that is repeating a victory. Not adding to it.

A. Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh.

Q. Madhya Pradesh was a split in the Congress really which scattered the vote. I mean, I thought at one time during the elections that you had more than 200 seats. Do you think that the hawala allegations curtailed that wave... came in the way ?

A. I would think that the two setbacks that affected us were : number one, Gujrat. And the second was Hawala. In the case of hawala, we were able to offset the setback by the decision that I took (to resign). But in totality, I do regard these two things as a setback.

Q. And how does the situation look now ? The CBI is accusing you of actually having gone to the Jains house to collect the money and so on and so forth.

A. Its before the court: at the stage of framing of charges.

Q. You would not want to comment........

A. No, I would not want to comment ....

Q. I understand that.

A. Though I would say that it is a total frame up and I do not know if you have seen Surinder Jain's letter to Madhu Limaye published in a book written by Madhu Limaye. It is a letter written in 1994, commenting on an article written by Madhu Limaye in which he said, I am surprised that in the course of your article, you have mentioned L K Advani. I can only tell you that I have never seen him or met him. All this of course will be produced as evidence.

Q. Do you think the whole hawala episode has hurt Mr Narasimha Rao rather than helped him ?

A. I think so. It has hurt the Congress party badly. Personally maybe he thinks (Rao) that he has not been hurt. But I think that this episode and the consequences of my decision to resign, which forced many others to resign, made many of (Rao's) colleagues lose all faith in him personally.

Q. He made a comment about your resignation in the interview that he gave to the Asian Age. He said that you left a-month-and-a-half-old Parliament but retained the presidentship of the party.

A. I can only say that I did not leave it for one-and-a-half months. Because if I had only resigned from the Parliament seat, this comment would have been legitimate. But my decision (until I am absolved I am not going back to Parliament) is relevant.... the case may last for years and years, so that the kind of aarop mukti jo main chahta hoon (release from accusation that I want) may not come at all. On that very day I told my colleagues that I am making a conscious decision and a conscious announcement and that announcement may mean the termination of my parliamentary career. With this knowledge I am making it. Anyone would appreciate that this is much much greater than even resigning presidentship.

Q. Presidentship of the party........

A. Presidentship of the party is something that in my case meant nothing much that way. This was more important from my point of view. Because the party is not expressing any distrust in me. It is not like some other party where the presidentship was forced to quit.

Q. Like the Janata Dal. To come back to a more substantive question. Look at the experience of the Vajpayee government from the viewpoint of the BJP voter. He votes for you for three or four things, which you make the basic themes of yor manifesto : reconstruction of Ram Mandir, Article 370, Uniform Civil Code and so on.... And then we must have the first BJP Prime Minister and he sounds like a Congress Prime Minister except that his name instead of Jawahar Lal Nehru is probably Seth Govind Das. How do you expect the BJP voter to not be disillusioned ?

A. There were so many opinion polls. I wish someone had done one on this. It would have been interesting. But what is more interesting is that I have not come across a single BJP worker or supporter who criticiced Vajpayee on this, not in these 15-20 days. Because I think that every person who supports the BJP and who wants the BJP and its government to succeed, could clearly see that here is a situation where we need the support of others and so naturally you would have to forge a programme which is acceptable to all. You cannot impose your programme on them. And that's that what he (Vajpayee) said even in his I debate, when someone asked him from the opposition ranks, why did you not speak about Article 370, this and that. Why? Because I did not have a majority. I appreciate the fact that our own supporters and even voters have become mature enough to understand the limitations of a coalition.

Q. But this is essentially a bartering of principles in order to stay in power. Would you have stayed in power for five years, assuming that you got the parties to support you on your minimum programmes and not done anything on these basic manifesto issues?

A. I do not know whether we would not have done anything. What we would have done and how we would have done is a different matter. But I can also tell you that those colleagues of mine or supporters who spoke to the Tamil Maanila Congress and the DMK, whom we were concentrating on and with whom we had discussions: they did discuss all these three or four issues with them... how do we project... should we frame a common minimum programme, how do we incorporate these in them. And some formulations were made even for that. And their first response was not negative. So we were not of the view that we should omit them altogether.

Q. And you would have later, after a year, betrayed their party?

A. We would not have betrayed them.

Q. You would not have gone back to your own manifesto?

A. No. I would not have. We would have done whatever we wanted in a majority government. But the simple fact is that we wanted the others to come along with us on the basis of a minimum common programm.

Q. Your dilemma basically arises from the fact that you are an ideological party with Hindutva as your idology. That is the reason why you've become the so-called untouchables.

A. (Pause) I am not very sure sure of it. If it was so, then even the allies that we got in the elections we would not have got. I attribute this attitude of of untouchability not to the ideology but principally to vote bank politics.

Q. Yes, but what vote bank politics does the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] have? What difference do the Muslims make to Mr Karunanidhi's victory or defeat in Tamil Nadu?

A. (Pause) They do not know us much, that's all. Aur usme dusre logon ka asar zyada hua...jinko who zayada jaante the (And there was the infulence of the others...those who knew them better). they were able to prevail on them.

Q. Both the Prime Minister speech and the President's speech that was implicit recognition of the fact that you may fight the election on certain planks but when it comes to running the country and ensuring social stability, you cannot actually implement the BJP manifisto.

A. No, it does not mean that. It simply means that you do not get an absolute majority, then you have to seek the support of others. You have to take into consideration their reservations on certain issues.

Q. If you get an absolute majority can you run the country by isolating the Muslims?

A. No. There is no need to isolate the Muslims. No need at all.

Q. But won't what you implement from your manifesto isolate the Muslims?

A. I don't subscribe to the view that a Uniform Civil Code is against the Muslims.

Q. Then what is it against? Why do you want to divest the Muslims from the Quranic law?

A. Are the sovereign Muslim countries where the law has been changed, and where the law is not akin to the orthodox law, abandoned the Quranic law or Islam?

Q. No, but there is a difference. There is a difference between reform within the Shariat, and the imposition of what might be called, for lack of a better word, a secular law.

A. That way even the criminal law of today is secular. It has nothing to do with the Islamic law, and yet the Islamic community has readily accepted it. It is only because of the impression created in the society by the political leaders of the country (about the Uniform Civil Code); otherwise in these last 40-50 years the Muslims would readily have accepted it.

Q. What precisely would you change in the Uniform Civil Code ?

A: Koi khas nahin. (nothing very much)...Some matters relating to inheritance and marital laws perhaps which I would think even in case of the Hindu law needs to be changed. There are disadvantages to the woman, to the girl, to the sister. It is more about gender justice.

Q. In fact that is my real question: if the changes are essentially minor, why make such a fuss about it? How is it so important? Why is it so high on the agenda, except as a conscious appeasement to Hindu sentiment?

A. No it is not a conscious appeasement of the Hindu sentiment, it is more a part of a crusade against vote bank politics. In fact even the Ayodhya movement came out of that. Had it not been for the formation of the Babri Mosque Action Committee in 1986, shortly after the Shah Banu case and the kind of support almost all the political parties began giving to the committee, we may not have taken up the issue so strongly. For us most of these issues are a part of a campaign against vote bank politics which we feel has distorted the perspective of the people, including on issues like Tada. The BJP was among the first to organise an anti-Tada [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act] conference, in Ahmedabad... Hum Tada ke khilaf the, lekin Tada ke khelaf movement khadi hui Hindustan mein, to kyon khadi hut? Ki yeh Musalmanon ke khilaf hai. Hum isko galat mante hain. Aur uske baad sab log usme jut gaye. (We were against Tada, but when a movement was started against Tada, then it was because it was considered an anti-Muslim law..We consider that wrong.)

Q. How is the creation of a Hindu vote bank politics any less immoral than a Muslim vote bank politics?

A: You cannot find a Hindu vote bank. Hindu vote bank agar hoga to yeh 20 percent aur 25 per cent honge. [sentence in Hindi, no translation provided]

Q. You have created sectional Hindu vote banks.

A: Main yeh maanta hoon ki agar hum isko channelise nahin karte, to Hindu ka reaction kharab hoga. (I believe that if we had not channelised this, then the Hindu reaction would have been far worse.)

Q. As they say in question papers, please explain.

A. The common man feels even more bitter about this, even on questions like the Uniform Civil Code. He perceives it in terms of population. But I do not.

Q. So what are you saying is that you are swallowing the poison, in a sense?

A. Claim hoga bada, yeh main zaroor samajhta hoon (It will be a big claim, that I understand but). The reaction of the average Hindu on these matters is really very strong, which I don't think is very healthy. Hum to isko ek national basis par present kartein hain aur usmein bhi itni safalta nahin hai. Uske aadhar pe 8-10 mahinon mein phenomenal growth hua hai party ka. Aur saaare ke saare hamare khilaf hote huay bhi jitne pragatee ho rahi hai, woh koi kam nahin hai. (We present this phenomenon on a national basis, and yet we have so much success. There has been a phenomenal growth of the party in the last 8-10 months, despite everyone being against us. That is not a small thing.)

Q. What I find very funny is that the moment one Muslim threatened you, you immediately appeased him. Sikander Bakht. You must have an answer to a seven day government changing a portfolio two days before the end of its term.

A. (Long pause) Additional portfolio de diya usmein kaun si badi baat hai. (There is nothing extraordinary about giving an additional portfolio).

Q. There's also another point here; and I'm looking at it from the viewpoint of Mr Bakht. He must be wondering that, in the assessment of his peers, he is permanently reserved for urban affairs.

A. You cannot complain against both the things.

Q. Woh 1977 wali portfolio phir unko mil gayeee (He got the same portfolio that he had in 1977).

A. (No comment)

Q. Well actually, even Vajpayeeji got the same portfolio, with an additional charge of course.

A. (No comment)

Q. To change the subject: there is this allegation that you used the 13 days in government to check all the files. There is this feeling that you have obtained some unknown evidence in the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha case that has come to your knowledge because of the files.

A. I have not seen anything, I have not heard anything. Home ministry may have seen it, but not to my knowledge.

Q. There was a suspicion that you were searching for evidence against the former Prime Minister.

A. I have absolutely no idea.

Q. As you think forward to the future of the BJP, in the next year or two years how confident are you about your own strategy. What would be the scenario if the government collapses; what if it does not collapse?

A. I don't see this government lasting its full tenure. I see no possibility of survival. There is bound to be a collapse.

Q. Why?

A. As I said this is a totally unnatural Front. Anti-BJPism cannot be the glue that keeps people together. Power, yes, to some extent.

Q. I think it is probably the best glue. It is the fear of a BJP victory and a complete knowledge that if the BJP comes back they will be the single majority party, meaning the end of a large number of political careers.

A. I think personal factors, personal lack of adjustments among the partners, all these things have hurt them. Humko nikalne ke liye kafi hoga lekin apne sarkar ko banaaye rakhne ke liye, aur itne lambe kal tak, yeh paryapt nahin hai. (It might have been good enough to remove us, but to keep their government going, and for so long, that seems unlikely.)

Q. So Mr R.K. Hegde's formulation of a common front against the BJP is not going to work?

A. I don't think so.

Q. He said it before the elecions.

A. (Smiles) He said it, but he anticipated another election also.

Q. Well another election could happen, but for different reasons. A united Congress could certainly be tempted to rid itself of some of the socialist elements and force an election.

A. I feel the Congress support from outside is the biggest destabilising factor for the Deve Gowda government.

Q. And if the Congress comes inside ?

A. That would be a different government.

Q. Before the elections you made a very interesting move via-a-vis Madhavrao Scindia, describing him as a prodigal son and welcoming him back to the party.

A. I did not say anything.

Q. But the party was not equally reticent.

A. Some party spokesman said it, yes. But the very next day when the pressmen asked me I was on tour, I said that our decision in respect of Gwalior was a very tactical decision to weaken the Congress in that region and thereby ensure that the BJP got the maximum share of seats from that region. Not putting up a candidate against Madhavrao Scindia in Gwalior would make him concentrate on Gwalior, concentrate on weakening the Congress. This is it. To humko faida hua is baat mein. Isse zyada main kuch nahin keh sakta. (We profited from the situation. I can't say anything more than that.)

Q. Do you expect and want a section of the Congress to move towards the BJP? Do you believe that a section of the Congressmen would want to join you ?

A. It is for them to make a decision. I can't say anything on that.

Q. You surely have a viewpoint.

A. In case the Congress for any reason disintegrates, there will be elements from the party which would certainly be welcome in our fold. Janata Dal is samay disintegrate kar raha hai, kuch matra mein. Agar koi aana chahate hain to aa sakte hain, usmein kya hai. (Janata Dal is disintegrating now, to some extent. If anyone wants to come, they can, there is no problem.)

Q. Are you comfortable with George Fernandes?

A. There has been no problem. He's working very smoothly.

Q. No, I'm talking about him being a Socialist.

A. (Laughs.)

Q. What will be the basic issue of the next elections?

A. I can't predict what happens in the coming months and years. But as of today the desire for change that was manifest in the verdict of 1996, that desire has been somewhat subverted, and I think that the electorate of the country would like to see this desire for change in the real sense of the word, and a change in favour of the BJP manifested so powerfully that it cannot be thwarted.

Q. To achieve that, do you think you'll have to do something about the resentment of the minorities against you ?

A. I don't think it is the resentment of the minorities that is responsible for it. I think that from that angle what Maulana Wahiuddin said was very correct. He castigated those uniting against BJP; he said you certainly have the right to fight against the BJP, oust it, but please don't do it in the name of the minorities. But for us, what is of greater importance is to see that our influence spreads geographically. In areas where we non-existent or where we are very weak.

Q. You won't make headway unless you change your Hindi policy.

A. Hamari Hindi policy to 1967 mein bani thi (Our Hindi policy was announced in 1967). It was in 1967 that, at our Calicut session, the president of the Jan Sangh at the time, who was not just the president but also the principal ideologue of the party, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay gave legitamacy to bilingualism. He said that we should not by any way convey this impression that we want to enforce Hindi on non-Hindi subjects and areas.

Q. For 30 long years nobody has believed you.

A. Nobody believes. That is a problem of image.

India 'Fears' Pakistani Nuclear Ability, Noncommittal to CTBT

BK0806164396 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 8 Jun 96 p 13

[Report by M. K. Dhar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Disturbing reports about Pakistan's accelerated nuclear weapons programme and its growing inventory of fissile material have driven the Indian Government to declare that the country will retain its nuclear option till the goal of complete disarmament is achieved.

The fears of the policy makers have been confirmed by the statements made by the former Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Aslam Beg, Dr Abdul Qadeer and now by former Chief of Pakistan Army's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Gen. Hamid Gul, who stated a few days ago that Pakistan was in possession of nuclear weapons.

No country could harm Pakistan "as long as we have the bomb", Gen. Hamid Gul told a meeting in New York, adding that if Iraqi leader Saddam Husayn "had the football that we have" he would not have suffered such an ignominious defeat in the Gulf War. As head of the ISI he was privy to the nuclear programme. Islamabad has expanded its nuclear programme to such an extent that it produces enough enriched uranium and plutonium for up to 10 bombs a year.

Though the new Government in India is still noncommittal about nuclear tests in future, it will not be able to withstand pressures against signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which is now being discussed by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The draft text of the treaty submitted a few days ago by Jaap Ramaker, Chairman of the ad hoc group negotiating the treaty, awaits the Government's decision and appropriate instructions have to be sent to the Indian negotiating team in Geneva.

The draft text seeks to shift the focus away from negotiations based on a rolling treaty text that included thousands of bracketed phrases on which participants would not agree. The negotiators at Geneva are now supposed to respond to various elements of the draft rather than slogging through a rolling text that was partly incomprehensible.

With China also having agreed to suspend nuclear testing, India now stands virtually isolated in opposing the CTBT without a commitment by the five nuclear powers to a time-bound programme of total nuclear disarmament. The dramatic shift in China's stand is evident from the fact that it initially insisted on the right to conduct "peaceful" nuclear explosion [PNE]; then called for a right to come back and get permission to conduct PNEs and, finally, for having the question of PNEs taken up at a review conference sometime in the future. The new draft does not include any clause on PNEs.

It is pointed out that resistance to the CTBT from the non-aligned group may finally crumble, leaving India alone to take a decision consistent with its national security interests. This was evident during the recent NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] review conference which India did not attend even as observer, and where the nonaligned group completely disintegrated before a vote was taken on its indefinite extension. The same is bound to happen in Geneva because no other nonaligned country, except Pakistan, is presently nuclear capable.

The new Indian leadership is not so firmly entrenched nor is it so stable as to annoy the United States beyond a point. It is likely that instead of blocking the treaty by opposing it, India may be forced to abstain from voting in protest, thus allowing it to be adopted. That would be consistent with the Indian position that it will sign neither the NPT nor CTBT until the question of universal disarmament is fully addressed. Pakistan is expected to follow suit having committed to fall in line only after India does.

Informed sources feel that Pakistan's strategy consists of straddling the fence. It seeks the best of both the worlds — continued American assistance in maintaining strong conventional capabilities, while pursuing its nuclear weapons programme. But for the technology stolen from the West and the United States ignoring its nuclear programme during the Afghan war, Pakistan would not have become a nuclear weapon state. Pakistan is currently pursuing efforts at option enhancement. It is trying to restructure its economy to generate enough resources to buy the latest weapons from the West, while pursuing its nuclear programme uninhibited by external pressures.

Pakistan has told the United States that it does not want the three P-3C Orion naval reconnaissance aircraft which should be sold to a third party and cash given to it, because these have become obsolete. The Pakistan navy has already upgraded its own Atlantics at a cost of $300 million to perform this role. Of the $368 million of military equipment being transferred to Pakistan under the Brown amendment, the Orions bear a price tag of $230 million. Pakistan wants cash even if these aircraft are sold to a third country at half their listed price, so that it can shop for other equipment in the arms market.

India: Left Front To Stop UF Government From Signing CTBT

BK0806150896 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 7 Jun 96 p 1

[Report by Palash Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Left Front will not allow the United Front [UF] government to sign the controversial Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty seeking to ban all nuclear explosions.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) politburo leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet told THE ASIAN AGE here on Thursday, [6 Jun] that there was absolutely no question of India signing on the dotted line at the end of the marathon talks being held in Geneva, which will conclude on June 28. "As far as our policy goes, it has remained consistent that India should not sign the CTBT," Mr Surjeet said. "The issue will be discussed by the Front's steering committee which will decide on what the government should do." Asked whether the threat of economic sanctions by the United States will put pressure on India into signing the treaty, Mr Surjeet said, "We cannot submit to threats of sanctions. We have to safeguard the country's interest first."

External affairs minister I.K. Gujral is finding it difficult to buy a consensus on the issue. Senior ministry officials said the situation is different as compared to a single party government. "It is not that it is a Janata Dal government and hence it will follow the Dal manifesto. Here, you will have to keep everyone happy. The biggest question, however, is whether India can afford severe economic sanctions from the United States if we don't sign on the dotted line on June 28," a senior official said citing the case of China which has got the most favoured nation status due to its soft stance on the Treaty.

The contentious issue is currently being negotiated at the 38-member disarmament conference in Geneva, which aims to conclude negotiations on a CTBT by June 28. While the United States is keen to see that the treaty gets unanimous approval, India has put forward stringent conditions that the treaty be linked with a definite date for elimination of all nuclear weapons in the world. This has led to a deadlock in the talks and the United States has even warned that the entire effort may have to be abandoned if the Treaty is not wrapped up by the target date of June 28. As per the rules of the Geneva conference, decisions can be taken only by consensus.

Every participant has a veto power which means that if India opposes the move or even abstains when the matter is put to vote, there will be no CTBT.

Iran

Iran: Tehran Ready To Send Fact-Finding Delegation to Bahrain

LD1006112796 Tehran IRNA in English 0622 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 10, IRNA — A senior Foreign Ministry official brushed aside claims leveled by Bahrain alleging Iran of interfering in that country, saying Tehran is ready to dispatch a fact-finding delegation to Manama to review Bahraini officials' purported evidence against the Islamic republic.

In an interview with the Persian daily 'IRAN' printed Monday, [10 June] Deputy Foreign Minister for Education and Research Affairs 'Abbas Maleki added that Bahrain's problems are internal and expressed hope that officials in that country would correct their blunder by not attributing their own domestic problems to foreign elements.

According to most Western media reports, the root causes of the popular protests in Bahrain relate to the political structure of the state, the people's non-participation in the decision-making process in the country and to economic problems.

Maleki, who recently visited the four Persian gulf states of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, remarked that Tehran officially recognized Bahrain immediately after it gained its independence from Iran, adding that Iran has always respected Manama's sovereignty.

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the situation in the Persian Gulf states that had traditional government structures, underwent major shifts and the first demand of the people was the right to take part in the political process, he said.

He noted that some regional countries paid closer attention to this demand and introduced various measures allowing people's participation but some states remained nonchalant.

Maleki referred to Kuwait as one of the countries that harmonized with recent developments, saying Kuwaitis are allowed to express their views in the press and in parliament.

To link their domestic problems with foreign elements, Bahraini officials last week forced some persons who were said to be from among the opposition, to claim on television that they had connections with Iran.

He said that during his recent visit to Manama, he was given two files by Bahraini officials, the first containing reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (Iranian Radio and Television) concerning developments in this tiny Persian Gulf state.

Maleki said he explained to Bahraini authorities that the reports were from Western sources and news agencies.

The second file consisted of interviews conducted by the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iranian Radio) with some members of the Bahraini opposition.

In this connection, it was stressed to Bahraini officials that the interviews were with persons who lived in Britain and who have been interviewed by other world media, including those in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Iran: Paper Warns Bahrain To Accept Mediation Offer

LD1106071096 Tehran IRNA in English 0638 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 11, IRNA — The rulers in Bahrain should accept Iran's mediation offer before their country turns into another Algeria in the Persian Gulf, the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' stressed Tuesday, [11 June] saying that Bahrainis would not be willing to pin their hopes for a just mediation on any other neighboring conservative monarchial regime.

"It is Iran's declared policy to work for peace and stability in the region," it said, noting Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's offer of Iran's good offices to help mediate an end to the internal uprising in this neighboring country.

Reiterating the crisis is of Manama's making and not "foreign inspired" as Bahraini authorities claim, it pointed out that the public sentiment's rejection of the ruling system is aggravated by "the financial corrupt ion and the deteriorating moral condition prevailing in Bahrain."

Also, the people in the tiny Persian Gulf state are facing a regime that has a habit of virtually crushing any movement no matter how popular and genuine the movement is, the editorial wrote.

Warning the country's rulers to open their eyes and accept Iran's mediation offer before they pave the way for the creation of another Algeria, it said that Bahrainis are reluctant to turn to neighboring countries for a just mediation, stressing, "the simple fact is that all of Bahrain's neighbors have the same ruling system that is under fire in Manama."

Iran: Paper Views Lack of Democracy in Bahrain

LD1006214496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 6 Jun 96 p 2

["Opinion Column" unattributed article: "Restore Parliament, Stop Pointing Fingers"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Unable to solve its problems through peaceful means Bahrain is pointing fingers at others outside its borders accusing Iran of fomenting people's struggle for restoring parliamentary system in that country.

Pointing fingers at others is an old ploy. It used to work when people were confined to the four walls of their houses. Today, we are living in a global village. An anachronistic regime in the 20th century cannot bury its head under the sand feeling that others are not aware of what is going on in the country.

Everybody in our shrunk world is well aware that the Bahraini citizens' demand is a simple one: Restore parliament which is a basic democratic institution.

The grassroots of the crisis in Bahrain is that an anachronistic regime has remained adamant vis-a-vis a fundamental right of the Bahraini citizens since 1975. Not only the Bahraini government but the international community are equally to blame for the crisis. People in Bahrain have been driven to the point that they really realize that all democratic means for restoring democracy have failed. Hence they have resorted to arms as the only means to restore the bastion of democracy to their country. If government restores this basic institution, the problem will be settled amicably.

The United States and international organizations are equally to blame for the crisis in Bahrain. The issue of democracy in Bahrain is another instance of the U.S. and UN double-standard approach. The United Nations and the United States shed crocodile tears for democracy in China and Cuba and several other countries in the world.

When it comes to the question of democracy and human rights in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Algeria, the totalitarian regimes are welcomed.

The United States is not really concerned about democracy in any part of the world. What is important is safeguarding its illegitimate interest at any cost. This is why totalitarian regimes like those in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are tolerated but Washington spares no effort in isolating the democratically elected government in Iran.

The Zionist regime's aggression of Lebanon is not condemned because it serves the interests of the United States. The nuclear warheads of the Zionist regime are not considered a threat to the world peace for they are at the service of the White House. But, despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervises Iran's nuclear installations, Washington does not stop its nonsensical charges against Iran, accusing her of attempting to procure nuclear weapons.

Over the past few years the United Nations has had a black record in dealing with the Third World countries. The United Nations has failed to perform its duties so far as the question of Palestine is concerned. It has failed in Lebanon, Algeria, Bosnia, Iran, and several other issue-areas. Bahrain is another test for the United Nations. To prevent another Algeria in Bahrain, the United Nations should play its part to restore democracy to the tiny shaykhdom.

Iran: U.S. Interests 'Threatened' by Peace Process in Afghanistan

LD0806120296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0955 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a time when the Afghan political factions are striving to find a permanent solution to the crisis in their country, some foreign powers are trying to prevent the fruition of this positive process. Among them, the United States is particularly concerned that its interests are threatened by the current peace process in Afghanistan.

For the first time in three years, members of the U.S. Congress yesterday [7 June] voted unanimously in favor of greater diplomatic involvement by their government in the Afghan conflict. In this respect, several congressmen, from the Californian Democrats, have proposed that the White House, in order to implement Washington's new plans in Afghanistan, should dispatch some delegations to Kabul to hold talks with the leaders of the warring factions.

This hasty decision by the U.S. Government was taken in the wake of a peace agreement signed by the two major political groups, led by President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Golboddin Hekmatyar. This agreement won the support of many other political groups in Afghanistan. The regional states — especially the neighboring countries, as the main supporters of peace and stability in Afghanistan — welcomed the political talks and asked other warring factions to join the process. However, distant powers — particularly the United States — which desire to interfere in all regional matters, have demonstrated that they are sensitive toward any efforts by the regional countries outside Washington's sphere of interference to resolve the Afghanistan crisis.

The recent response of the U.S. Congress was an example of this sensitivity. Many experts believe that presently the United States is concerned that the Afghan crisis is being resolved in a manner contrary to Washington's interests. In other words, despite the huge political and military support given by Washington to some warring factions in Afghanistan, it seems as if the current political process is not going to satisfy American interests. It is, therefore, predicted that at this juncture the Americans will continue their support of some opponents of the Rabbani government and will exploit them as a pressure lever in order to win concessions. It is now up to the powerful political groups in Afghanistan to cooperate with one another and resolve their differences promptly so as to prevent the aliens from interfering in their country's peace process.

Iran: Editorial Warns Against U.S. Intervention in Gulf

LD0906151496 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 5 Jun 96 p

[Editorial: "Who Benefits From Tension in the Persian Gulf?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its most visible political and propaganda attack on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government of Bahrain announced that it has discovered a network of saboteurs who, armed with guns and ammunition, intended to carry out a coup against the government of Bahrain.

According to the claims of the Bahraini minister of information, which were extensively reported by the

Western and Arab media, these saboteurs trained in Iranian military camps and intended to bring down the government of Bahrain through Iran's financial and organizational support.

In this article, we do not intend to discuss the recent unrest in Bahrain or its roots. But since statements by Bahrain officials about Iranian involvement in that country's disturbances are being repeated stronger than ever, we have no choice but to point out some facts about the creation of tension in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf.

The reality is that through the strategy of "dual containment," the United States is faithfully pursuing its policy against the people and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The most important instrument of this strategy is to create regional tension and conflict.

Indeed, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and U.S. domination over affairs in the Persian Gulf, tension has helped to establish and expand the political, military, and economic influence and presence of the United States in the region.

It is because of such tension that today the Persian Gulf has the highest American naval presence at sea, the highest number of [foreign] technical and financial advisers, and the highest volume of U.S. trade.

Despite all this the United States, and in particular the Democrats in the White House, have not been able to implement their plans about Iran. The U.S. presidential elections are now approaching and the Democrats suffered badly at the hands of the Republicans during the elections to the Congress. It is therefore natural for the officials in the Pentagon to do "something" in the remaining period in order to attract votes.

Since the Middle East peace process is moving very slowly — due to Syrian steadfastness and the victory of the Likud Party in the recent Zionist elections — and since it seems unlikely to see any brilliant improvements in the Democrat's record before the presidential elections, the Persian Gulf must expect more action by the United States and its allies towards creating tension, even to the point of limited military engagements. Indeed, the political actions and propaganda of the past several days by officials in Bahrain, must be analyzed in this context.

Iran rejects any accusations of involvement in the unrest in Bahrain and its neighbors and believes that any political tension in the tightly packed region of the Persian Gulf would waste vast quantities of material and strategic resources that belong to all the littoral states of this closed sea. Naturally Iran, the largest country in the region, has no inclination towards any political-military engagement that would bring foreigners to this sea and believes this to contradict its national and security interests.

This reality should not have been hidden from the leaders of the southern states of the Persian Gulf.

Iran: Daily Says U.S. Facing Virtual Fiasco in Economic War

LD0806065496 Tehran IRNA in English
0614 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 8, IRNA — An English morning daily on Saturday, [8 June] assessing the effectivity of the American policy of paralyzing Iran economically and isolating it politically, said the punitive measures adopted by Washington failed in achieving their hostile goals against the Islamic Republic.

"Washington is facing a virtual fiasco in its economic war against Iran," the TEHRAN TIMES noted, pointing out that Tehran was able to replace American buyers of crude with new customers from other countries and the country's oil industry was able to continue operating without any interruptions despite the refusal of American companies to sell oil equipment to Tehran.

On attempts to isolate Iran in the international community, it recalled that the Islamic government has just hosted high-ranking officials from more than forty countries when the Mashhad-Tedzhen railway was inaugurated, attesting to the fact that Iran has many friends.

Underscoring that U.S. bullying merely enraged the European Union (EU), Russia, Japan and almost all countries of the world, the editorial said, "the civilized community believes that trade wars, sanctions and baseless accusations should not be used as avenues to achieve political objectives."

Calling on the EU to thwart American blackmail, it warned that if Washington applied trade sanctions against the third world, it could apply them against developed countries in the future.

The modern world has undergone a substantial change in the areas of economy and politics compared to a few decades ago, the daily wrote, concluding, "the U.S. had better try to understand these changes rather than seek to misrepresent and oppose independent and sovereign states, such as Islamic Iran, projecting them as pariah states to no avail."

Iran: U.S. Faces 'Isolation' After Cuban Sanctions Tightened

LD0706150396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a backlash to the new U.S. law concerning the tightening of sanctions against Cuba, the Mexican Government announced that it may take punitive measure against the U.S. Administration. Mexico's Minister of Trade and Development Herminio Blanco warned that if the sanctions are tightened against Cuba, Mexico will impose more tariffs on U.S. imports.

Canadian Premier Jean Chretien in an address to the parliament announced that Canada is intent on defending the rights of Canadian companies and promised to bring up the tightening of Cuba's sanctions in a meeting of the G-7, slated for the late June in Lyons, France.

Meanwhile, the 34-member Organization of American Companies [as heard], in a communique released in Panama on Tuesday 4 June, condemned the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Therefore, in view of all American countries, from Canada in the north to Chile, the Washington drive is a violation of international trade provisions and far beyond the territorial responsibility of the United States. Faced with the united policy of American countries, the U.S. Administration, for the first time in its history, is in a state of absolute isolation. But the Washington Administration is still launching futile efforts to impose its wrong policy on other countries. Perhaps the U.S. lawmakers, while passing the Helms-Burton bill, will have never foreseen such a severe backlash of the region and the world public opinion.

According to reports, ever since the passing of the Helms-Burton bill in the U.S. Congress, no foreign company has bowed to the U.S. pressure; but they have also enjoyed further supports of their governments. Cuban officials, however, say that the total amount of investments made in Cuba tops $2.1 billion, claiming that the recent bill of the U.S. for penalizing foreign firms trading with Cuba has never led to the withdrawal of foreign investments from the country.

Some countries even have gone so far as to threaten the U.S. Administration with punitive measures. Therefore, as Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. — the three member countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA — have split over the U.S. embargo against Cuba, the future of the treaty is in doubt because one of the center pieces of a comprehensive treaty is the adoption of united policies, something rare in NAFTA. According to analysts, in view of the opposition of the member countries of the Organization of American Countries, along with Canada and Mexico, to the U.S. sanctions against Cuba, the U.S. officials have been placed in a state of isolation in their foreign policy.

In the home front, the U.S. officials seem to prefer their personal and party interests to their country's national interests, because they seem to want to elongate their stay in the White House.

Iran: Peres' Candidacy for UN Secretary General Post 'Insult'

LD0806141496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 5 Jun 96 p12

[Unattributed political commentary entitled: "An Insult to Global Intelligence"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel's criminal politician, Shim'on Peres, is planning to make himself a candidate for the post of the UN secretary general. The decision, announced by the office of the present secretary general, has been welcomed by the United States.

In the thick file of the Zionists' crimes, Shim'on Peres, who was defeated by the Likud candidate Netanyahu in the recent elections in occupied Palestine, is indicted as the principal and decisive element of all crimes committed by the Zionists in Palestine and Lebanon. His latest crime is the attack on Lebanon and the horrific massacre of civilians in Qana. Nevertheless, in order to provide a cover-up for this unforgivable act of barbarism, the U.S. Government colluded with the UN to reach a compromise. Under this compromise, the United Nations would close the file on the Israeli crimes in Qana if the Pentagon maintained the U.S. forces in Bosnia to command and coordinate the NATO units.

The collusion on the eve of Peres' decision indicates that he is seriously thinking of becoming the next UN secretary general. This also demonstrates the extent of the vulgarity and impudence which rule over the UN.

So, thanks to U.S. support and the incompetence of UN organs, Mr. Peres is planning to become the next secretary general of an organization originally founded to promote international peace and security, and to safeguard basic human rights. To nominate such a ruthless and savage person as Peres as a candidate for the position of UN secretary general is an insult to the intelligence and understanding of the international community. [passage omitted]

Perhaps the announcement of such a decision is a cautious step to test global public opinion. Maybe the objective of the decision is to assess the international community's response vis-a-vis such an impudent insult. Future decisions may be altered after the evaluation and assessment of this response.

Iran: Official on Country's Ties to Turkmenistan

NC0806064096 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 21 May 96 p 15

[Report by RESALAT correspondent in Turkmenistan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran's presence in Central Asia can be further deepened by means of economic projects. This was stated by 'Ali Majedi, the director general of the CIS and Caucasus desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He added: In addition to the plans implemented so far, or which do not require the allocation of financial resources, a sum of $200 million has been allocated in order to implement economic projects in Central Asia.

Regarding Iran-Turkmenistan relations, he stated that they are friendly and cordial. Iran has many projects under way in Turkmenistan, including a factory for processing kaolin, which is the raw material for ceramic sanitary fittings, and the completion of the Bajgiran-Ashgabat highway. The ground has been broken for the fiber optics project, which will be completed at a cost of $22 million, and for the construction of the 50 km Gug Tappeh highway to Ashgabat.

The implementation of these projects, at a total cost of $80 million, marks the beginning of operations by Iranian companies in Turkmenistan.

Commenting on Turkmenistan's economic situation, Majedi said: In view of its massive reserves of oil and gas, Turkmenistan's economy has entered the international sector and made stupendous strides in economic development and in eliminating the poverty stemming from communist rule. With its projects becoming operational in Iran and in other countries, Turkmenistan will be able to extricate itself from its backwardness.

He added: The deprivation resulting from the rule of communist ideology in Turkmenistan is so great that that country even lacked filtered potable water. We are planning to set up a water and sewage network in the city of Marv.

He continued: At present, in addition to broadening political relations with each of the Central Asian and Caucasian countries, our interests in the region are relatively greater than they were in the past. The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently considered one of the main countries imparting peace, stability, and economic progress to the region.

He stressed that Iran enjoys the most extensive political and economic relations with Turkmenistan and stated: Our longstanding historical ties, and 900 km of common borders have resulted in the broadening of ties with Turkmenistan. When the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is solved we will be willing to implement similar projects in Azerbaijan as well. Iran also has wonderful relations with Kyrgyzstan.

Iran: IRAN NEWS Criticizes OPEC Decision To Increase Quotas

LD1006090896 Tehran IRNA in English 0730 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 10, IRNA — The latest decision of the Organization of Petroleum exporting Countries (OPEC) to hike members' production quotas to 25.033 million barrels per day in the second half of the year, would adversely affect oil prices and influence the organization's ability to establish its true position in the international market, 'IRAN NEWS' commented Monday. [10 June]

Dubbing this as "OPEC's latest blunder," the editorial of the English daily added that instead of curtailing member countries' output and penalizing quota violators, OPEC responded to Iraq's re-entry in the international oil scene by raising its production ceiling.

Such a decision showed that OPEC has been influenced by the big players to protect their own quotas to the detriment of majority of the other members, the editorial said.

Stating that this move would not improve oil prices and that the cartel would not be able to establish its true place in the market, it added that judging from past performances, there are currently no assurances that the present quota would be observed as violators were not punished in the past.

"Decline in prices mostly benefit major consumers which are the industrialized nations, and the loss is directly borne by oil producers," it noted.

It concluded by stressing, "it is imperative that OPEC members as well as non-OPEC producers, such as the U.K. and Norway, to carefully consider the realities of the petroleum market and the extent of the oil demand," underlining that the exploitation and use of oil should not be to the economic detriment of the third world.

Iran: Arms Companies Profit From 'Scare Stories' About Iran

LD1006213596 Tehran IRNA in English 1751 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 10, IRNA — Western arms manufacturers are hoping to capitalise on a new clamour of 'scare stories' about Iran to convince Persian Gulf states to impart more oil wealth on defense equipment yet to be integrated.

According to the FINANCIAL TIMES Monday, [10 June] defense firms are feeding extra revenue earned from gently rising oil price and so-called 'increasing nervousness' about Iran, even though its military spending ratio to GDP is the lowest in the area. Dampening the prospect in another estimated dlrs 60 billion to be spent by the Arab littoral states on arms between now and 2000, however are the problems of absorbing their existing array of western weaponry.

Top of the list are said to be Saudi Arabia and the UAE, prepared to lavish orders that conveniently are split for political gain and defense cooperation agreements, that shatter any remaining mirage of collective Persian Gulf security. The FINANCIAL TIMES listed the U.S., Britain and France in competition to supply around 80 advanced combat aircraft for the UAE that apparently are now needed to strike at Tehran without refuelling following its provoked 'Abu Musa' dispute with Iran.

Even though Saudi Arabia has cut this year's defense budget by almost 9 per cent, it is said to be looking to add another armored brigade to its ground forces and replace its light Grumman F-5 light fighters in the next few years.

Beyond these, the Saudi kingdom reportedly has an interest in acquiring ballistic missile defenses against Scud attacks, more minesweepers and submarine-hunting helicopters to detect two Russian Kilo submarines bought by Iran. The smaller defense requirements of Qatar and Oman are said by the FINANCIAL TIMES to depend upon how succession issues are played out in the larger Persian Gulf states and any following changes in diplomatic and defense leanings.

Kuwait, which is seen like Saudi Arabia struggling to integrate billions of dollars of western arms already bought, was reported not to be expected to place any big orders this year, until after elections for the National Assembly. It was Kuwait's award of a dlrs 100 million missile order to Britain last week that was seen as the first sign of arms sales in the Persian Gulf picking up again following a recent lull, after huge contracts were placed in the post-1991 allied war period.

Iran: Abdollah Nuri on Composition of Interim Majles Presidium

LD0806214696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 5 Jun 96 p 2

[Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin "Abdollah Nuri: The Servants of Construction Will Resolutely Follow Their Thesis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Home news desk: Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Abdollah Nuri — who came second to Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri during the fifth Majles presidium election by 105 votes to 132 — expressed his views on the composition of the interim presidium at a news conference.

Concerning the vote to choose the interim fifth Majles speaker, he said: By receiving the votes of 132 from the Majles deputies, Mr. Nateq-Nuri demonstrated that he has no difficulty in obtaining votes.

Speaking to a group of parliamentary correspondents, Abdollah Nuri added: Therefore, even if the deputies from constituencies where the election results were cancelled were present in the Majles, there would not have been any change in the composition of the presidium since 132 votes almost constitute a simple majority. He pointed out: Although most of the candidates in constituencies where results were cancelled were from the Servants [of Construction] group and their presence in the Majles could have made some slight difference, but the vote for Mr. Nateq-Nuri shows that nearly the majority of the deputies consider him to be the best for the post.

He added: The fact that the cancellation of those constituency election results has had a political basis, and that ideological and political currents had their effects on the election is another issue. In the Majles, individuals are able to express their views on bills, proposals, and various decisions, bearing in mind their voting independence. Of course, there is the possibility of the existence of a powerful current, and for the speaker to be from that current and within it makes decisions concerning various issues, and naturally get the majority vote. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that this was not always true in the past about the Majles, and in the instance of numerous proposals and bills the voting will take a merger form.

Asked whether the composition of the presidium might affect the trend of the Servant group's ideological and political formation, Nuri replied: The Servants faction will resolutely pursue its own former ideological thesis.

Iran: Paper Examines Factional Politics in Majles

LD0806125996 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Jun 96 p 1, 13

[Report by Irfan Parviz: "JRM Get Clear Majority in Majles Inner Elections"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Sunday's [9 June] open session of the Majles, the Jame-e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) received a clean chit from the legislative body, proving that it 'enjoys a majority.'

The JRM's prominence was demonstrated during the election of the Interim Presiding Board of the Majles, in which its leader, 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, retained his top post in the new parliament with 132 votes.

IRAN NEWS earlier predicted the outcome of the Interim Presiding Board and was proved correct on Sunday.

Another candidate of the faction G-6, or the Servants of Construction, 'Abdollah Nuri could win the goodwill of 105 lawmakers from the 241 present in Sunday's elections.

Hasan Rowhani, a common candidate between the G-6 and the JRM in the March-April general elections, received the highest number of votes at 226 for the post of First Deputy Speaker.

New office holders elected on Sunday include; Deputy Speaker Movahhedi-Kermani, Reza Taqavi, Mohsen Yahyavi, Hoseyn Hashemi, Dorri Najafabadi, Movahedi Sasvuji, Reza Akrami, Hasan Ghafuri-Fard, Mohammad Reza Bahonar.

Analyzing the Majles vote, one expert noted that seven out of the 249 deputies were absent from the session and four abstained.

"The 11 members who either were not present in the Majles or abstained will play a crucial role in determining the majority in the Majles in the future," IRAN NEWS Editor-in-Chief M. Firuzi commented.

All elected office bearers are affiliated with the JRM except four, including Rowhani, who were on the common list with the G-6.

Firuzi said, "True, the JRM proved to have a majority, but it is not the same as it had in the Fourth Term of the Majles."

The elections for the permanent Presiding Board will be held on Wednesday.

"Well, I talked to several experts on the Majles and they share my opinion that the loyalties of some lawmakers could be changed at a later stage," Firuzi said.

"The same happened during the Second Term of the Majles," he recalled. President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani was Majles Speaker in the Second Term.

"Another significant aspect of the Sunday elections is that 'Abdollah Nuri secured 105 votes, which meant that the G-6 could succeed in entering into an alliance with the Left-Wingers (followers of the Imam's line)," Firuzi said, adding that it will prove to be a shaky combination.

Iran: Deputy Comments on Composition of Fifth Majles

LD0806130096 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Jun 96 pp 1, 13

[News report: "JRM Holds Sway in New Majles"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A leading Majles member this week said he foresees no change in the Fifth Majles as compared to the 4th, with the Jame-e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) "still holding sway."

In an interview with IRAN NEWS, Hasan Ghafurifard, Tehran representative, said he drew his conclusions following the elections for the provisional board of directors of the Majles, on Sunday 2nd June.

In these elections, 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri was elected Speaker, fetching 133 votes. Other members of the board were from the JRM.

Ghafurifard, an independent candidate, said that "in the 5th Majles, the JRM is calling itself Hezbollah."

Hezbollah is a traditional group which has existed in all previous terms of the Majlis and whole-heartedly believes in 'Vilayah Faqih' (guardianship of the supreme Muslim jurisprudence), the MP added.

"Surely, the Hezbollah is not in coordination with the G-6, but this does not mean that other wings are incompatible with the Hezbollah," he said.

Ghafurifard said the JRM holds the majority of 5th Majles seats with some 130-140 members belonging to the JRM.

"There are other MPs who have not yet reached their final decision and will soon join us," he stated. Ghafurifard's views are close to those of the JRM.

"Of the 27 elected candidates who were not able to occupy Majles seats due to the cancellation of votes in their constituencies, 21 or 22 were from the G-6," he commented.

"The number of G-6 MPs will become less than 105, as the independent MPs of that wing will most probably joint the JRM," he said.

Iran: Conversation With Behzad Nabavi

96LA0247B Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Apr 96 p 11

[Interview with Engineer Behzad Nabavi, Fifth Majles candidate of the coalition of the forces of the Line of the Imam, by SALAM; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Boxed item] Note — **In continuing the interviews with experts by the Political**

Service of SALAM regarding the Fifth Majles elections, in this issue we present to the dear readers the statements of Engineer Behzad Nabavi, a Fifth Majles candidate of the coalition of the forces of the Line of the Imam, who has come to the second round of elections. [end boxed item]

[SALAM] The number of groups that have introduced candidates in these elections is much larger than in the previous terms. What is your analysis in this regard?

[Nabavi] I too, believe that the number of lists in this term has exceeded other elections, possibly with the exception of the first election. In my opinion, this will contribute to the enthusiasm and joy of the elections and the increasing presence of the people on this important scene. I see the reason first, in the appearance of new spectra in the society, especially among our own forces, that have caused the number of lists to increase. Today, we see four lists, each regarding the elements affiliated with one spectrum in the society. At the same time, there are several other lists for which we may not be able to draw specific ideological tendencies. In my opinion, this is the first reason for the existence of different and numerous spectra. The second reason is the sensitivity of all the spectra to the exclusive rule of one particular spectrum. I feel that, especially among our own forces, all the spectra have come to the conclusion that the scene must not be left empty for one particular spectrum to gain exclusive rule. This is what we have wished for a long time and published in No. 18 of ASR-E MA in an article in which we discussed the strategy of the traditional right to gain exclusive rule and asked all spectra to enter the arena actively and prevent a "one horse" race and the exclusive presence of one group in the Majles elections. Even though much effort was made for this presence not to be an overall presence and to be weak, despite all of that, fortunately, all spectra have paid attention to the conditions and entered the scene, regardless of the fact that the lists of some spectra are very similar.

[SALAM] An implicit coalition of the Kargozaran and the [Jame'eh-ye] Ruhaniyyat-e Mobarez [Militant Clergy Association] has taken place in practice. What is your opinion in this regard?

[Nabavi] In response to this question, I must say that first the issue of the coalition of this new group (Kargozaran) and the Militant Clergy Association has been an issue for a long time, and once it failed and as a result the Kargozaran offered an independent list, but in their independent list, there are 10 candidates of the Militant Clergy Association. Perhaps what we are referring to at the present is the presence of one of the distinguished figures among the candidates of the Militant Clergy Association in the list of the Kargozaran. We also were surprised as to how a movement that had announced that it was trying to stabilize a new identity, includes a distinct figure of its opposite or rival spectrum on its own list. In practice, in my opinion, this action harms the identity of the new movement. It seems that the rank and file of the movement is not very happy with this action, but for whatever reason, this has occurred and cannot be called a coalition. It is a partnership that makes the boundaries a bit unclear and nonspecific.

[SALAM] In your opinion, have government resources such as the Voice and Vision been at the service of the elections fairly or not?

[Nabavi] In an article in ASR-E MA, we wrote explaining how the Voice and Vision in practice supports a particular tendency. It brings the elements affiliated with that tendency under various pretexts in the campaign in previous weeks to the podium and even broadcasts their election speeches in the Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Even in polling the people, they try to have individuals who comment on a particular faction on television. Even if someone were to talk about prison memoirs, they would bring someone from the candidates of one faction. For example, one group from the Voice and Vision came to me prior to the month of Ramadan and insisted on having a television interview. They said that they wanted to broadcast those interviews (which were supposed to be with the political prisoners of the previous regime) at the sunset call for prayer in the month of Ramadan. In this connection, they also had an interview with me, but this interview was not broadcast when it was unclear whether or not I was a candidate.

Well, we saw that accidentally in the street they would come across a candidate of a particular faction, ask his opinion, and show it on television. In the week that, according to the law, the names of candidates could not be discussed, this was done, of course, in various forms — in ceremonies, anniversaries, special weeks, etc. — which naturally have their effect. On the one hand, they say not to conduct expensive campaigns and not to vote for anyone who has an expensive campaign. On the other hand, we see these problems in the Voice and Vision. Certainly, no matter how expensive a campaign, it is not as effective as mentioning the name of a person or a group on television to attract people's attention. Of course, what was said is not by any means illegal or prohibited. We must keep in mind that when, for instance, they refer to the clerics and ascribe one spectrum to the clerics, this is associated in the minds that others' groups are anti-clerical. (It is constantly said, they are anti-cleric, do not vote for them, vote for the supporters of the clerics.) Now, one list has the name of the clerics, and regarding the other lists, because they do not have the names of the clerics, the people determine that probably the rest are anticleric. Hence, one should vote for those who have the name of clerics on them. At the same time, our people know that on every list where they see the name of one or several clerics, it shows that no list is anti-clerical. This publicity means, in short, vote for the ones we specify. These are very old weapons. They were used in the Fourth Majles election as well, but are now used differently.

[SALAM] What is your last plan before campaigns are stopped, and what is your last recommendation to the people?

[Nabavi] First, I must say that there are two groups of candidates: one group of independents and another group introduced by political organizations.

The independent candidates usually become candidates from the provincial cities, and when they are asked a question, unfortunately, they speak about the problems of their own region. For example, they say that they will solve the water problem, they will solve the electricity problem. Perhaps for this reason, independent candidates have less chance of being elected to the Majles in Tehran because discussing such issues is not possible in Tehran and individuals can hardly implement their programs.

The second group are the candidates of political organizations, and I consider myself to be affiliated with a political organization. Hence, if I give an opinion here, it is the opinion of the organization, not my personal opinion. If we want to talk about the individual, the only criterion for people's judgment is personal qualifications in the sense that, does a person whose organization has such mottoes and makes such claims have the competence to implement these mottoes if he goes to the Majles?

I speak as a candidate of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and three other groups: the Islamic Association of Teachers, including university professors; the Islamic Society of Iranian Teachers; and the production lines under the title of the Cooperative Movement. Of course, I mostly adhere to the positions of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which are not very different from other groups, at the level of which I am speaking.

Of the mottoes of the organization in the Fifth Majles elections which I support, first is the motto of preservation of the independence of the country and the Islamic, popular identity of our revolution and regime. Second is guarding freedom, people's participation, and the rule of law. Third is securing justice. Fourth is the motto of overall, independent development coupled with justice.

Perhaps the motto of justice and development is seen in many of the campaign posters and clothes which are prepared by various organizations and spectra, but I have not seen the motto of guarding the freedom in any of these, and we have had and have a particular emphasis on this issue, because we believe that, especially in these elections, if people are not careful and do not pay sufficient attention in their votes, this very important and sacred principle of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic and one of the three main slogans of our Islamic revolution may be harmed seriously, and, God forbid, an ideological movement will govern the fate of our country that has no belief in this principle. Of course, the freedom that we speak of, as we have said frequently, is not meant to mean liberal freedom. It is the liberties stated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, and we do not consider the Constitution of the Islamic Republic to be contrary to Islam in the same way that our late imam stated, we do not consider it against Islam in any way and regard it to be precisely in line with Islam. We set forth the issue (principles of freedom) in a series of slogans concerning what is necessary; that is, a series of slogans regarding what we should not do in order to have the rule of justice and a second series concerning what we should do to have the rule of justice.

Regarding what we should not do, we have stated it in our campaign posters: prevention of the rule of capitalist regime and the rule of the market. It means that the rule of the capitalist, both in the modern and traditional sense, must be prevented. Of course, the explanation of this point is quite necessary, that we do not by any means oppose the growth and thriving of the productive, non-parasitic sector in the country and consider it necessary. Not only do we not oppose it, we regard it necessary and beneficial.

When we discuss the rule of capitalism and the market, it means that we say that the fate of the country should not fall in the hands of a particular powerful group, and Article 43 of the Constitution should not be violated. If we attack some of the capitalists, it is the parasitic capitalists who engage in nothing but speculation. Despite the fact that the motto of privatization has been discussed for six years in the country, this stratum has not yet engaged in productive work. Hence, it must be noted that our opposition with the rule of the market and the rule of capitalism does not mean that the noble producers and business people who are now actively turning the wheels of the national economy will be attacked. On the whole, we mean that the control of the regime must not be given to capitalism (as in the United States).

Regarding the second motto of what should not be done, it is an effort to stop the policy of modification. In other words, we say that an anti-justice system must not be created because we say that the capitalist regime will cause the creation of two poles in the society. If the regime becomes bipolar, the issue of justice will become meaningless in such a regime, and if we give the advanced industrial societies as an example, there too, justice does not exist. Welfare may exist.

The policy of economic modification cannot establish justice in a Third World country, especially a Third World country that has gone through a great revolution and eight years of imposed war. This policy will prevent the establishment of justice in such a country. No one opposes the abundance of goods in the market at low prices so that there would be no coupons, rationing, lines, and Basij books. We insist on the halt to the policy of modification, because we believe that the policy of modification is still being endorsed by the majority in the Majles, and this policy is being implemented. There are inescapable curtailments and inescapable reversals created in this policy. Even so, the leaders of the majority faction in the Majles have said and have not denied that they support the policy of modification on behalf of that faction, and in some cases they differ from the government, especially in those areas where the government deviates from the policy of modification. On the whole, I must say that justice can rule in our country when the capitalist regime does not govern and the policy of modification is stopped as a principle, as a basis, and as a strategy.

The economic structure and economic regime that must govern the country is that which is emphasized explicitly in Article 44 of the Constitution and Article 43 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. We believe that without partisan interpretations in order to negate and destroy the government sector that is supposed to have the strategic and major economic sectors at its disposal, Articles 43 and 44 of the Constitution must be implemented (a mixed economy with emphasis on the cooperative sector).

In particular, Article 44 shows what our approach to the economic system should be, not to mention that in the early years of the revolution there were discussions concerning our economy as an Islamic economy. We asked: What kind of economy is that? If it is the one that has been implemented during these five or six years, well, we have judged it. But we believe that an Islamic economy is what is stated in the Constitution, contrary to the opinion of some, who say that this was for early in the revolution and the period when the ideology of the left governed the country and that the problem of Article 44 must be resolved at the first opportunity and eliminated, or with certain interpretations and analyses make this article useless, as with the interpretations and analyses that nowadays we see regarding this article. Of course, because we did not have a strong private sector to be able to take charge of the large and parent industries and strategic sectors of the economy, much effort was made to transfer everything to the private sector.

As GOL AQA states in "40 Years Later," today it was decided to transfer the government to the private sector as well. We see that in these five or six years, not much success has been gained regarding this issue, especially in the area of the government sector, that must remain in accordance with the Constitution. It is not because they respected Article 44, but because no one has been found to privatize it. Of those who want to buy government factories, some want to take the machinery, salvage it in the Customs Square, and auction it off.

Hence, in our opinion, a regime that is based on Article 44 of the Constitution, with consideration for the emphasis on Article 43 of the Constitution, can be just.

Second, in order to enter this discussion, I must first point out an example. In the first week after the war — that is, in Shahrivar 1367 [23 August-22 September 1988] — as the minister of heavy industries, I had a television interview. (It is customary to interview the ministers on television during Government Week.) The interviewer made such statements as: Now that the war has ended, certainly everything will be found in abundance, and social services will be created in the society. In response, I said, "Do not give such promises to the people at all. Our nation must tighten its belt for at least 10 years and suffer hardship in order to be able to make up for the effects of this revolution and this long, great war, to some extent.

The next day, the elements of the right began to telephone the Prime Minister's Office, the Majles, and the Ministry of Heavy Industries from morning to night. Strong criticisms and insults were levied against me and it was said, "With this statement, he has destroyed the economy and raised the price of foreign currency and gold coins."

Even in the Cabinet, an individual affiliated with the right faction strongly criticized me, saying: What kind of talk is this you have on radio and television, destroying the economic stability of the country? This issue continued such that even Mr. Hashemi, who was at the time the speaker of the Majles, gave me a letter and said: Answer this letter. I was obliged to report on the price of foreign currency and coins 10 days earlier and later in the market in a letter to Mr. Hashemi. In the same letter, I emphasized: Mr. Speaker, be assured that we will not be able to create social services and abundance even in 10 years, and we will have to suffer hardship. Today, as I am stating the policies of the organization, I believe that we will have to continue the control policies for another 15 years, and I dare say such a thing, because I see that a return to the control policies has started. There was a time and a climate in which we would not dare raise the issue of the law related to the forgers of coupons in the Majles. They said: Retrieve this bill, because coupons are rejected, and if we discuss it, there will be opposition; hence, it will be more respectful if you withdraw the bill yourself. Now, fortunately, all those who told us, "Coupon-ism is synonymous with communism," are proud that in the Second Five-Year Plan they have increased the number of coupons to create more justice. They thought that justice would only be secured by giving coupons. They added subsidies to secure justice. Hence, we can now say and predict that, considering the war, the revolution, and these six years of anti-control policy that governed the country, we need to carefully control our national economy for 15 years. In other words, we should control our revenues and expenditures carefully, continue the rationing of essential and necessary goods, and reestablish the economic mobilization booklets in place of these lines that are 3 km long.

In order for these gentlemen not to say that we deviated and not to say that we have turned away from our policy because they had insulted the economic mobilization booklets so much, they would not resume the economic mobilization booklets. People stand in lines that are several kilometers long because, for instance, some grocer is selling oil. What would be the problem with resuming the economic mobilization booklets again and giving coupons for the goods you wish and announcing the rest in the booklet? In a series of stores, you give these goods at the preferred or other rates. There too, you see that a few steps further, the same item is sold at the open market price. Anyone who can, stands in line 20 times and gets the same item 20 times, and those who cannot and do not have the time get nothing. Not to mention standing for ceremonies. This is the fate of the country.

Do not think that it is a bad thing to come and say bravely that you have made a mistake and have changed your position strategically, and reestablish rations of essential goods, ration foreign currency, reestablish the foreign currency allocation committee, create of foreign currency allocation committees in various executive organizations and rationing of foreign currency by various executive organizations. No one will tell you that you have done a bad thing. They will say that this was a mistake, and now they have come back.

If we want a policy to govern the country that guarantees justice. We must have control over the important sectors of the economy. The important sectors include the market of essential goods needed by the people, the foreign exchange market, and important production and fundamental investments in the country. The policy of control must continue until the national production increases to such a level that it is possible to create a balance between supply and demand without increasing prices. In my opinion, with the implementation of these policies, in the long term, we shall witness a society in which justice rules relatively, and in the short term, to fight inflation and high prices, except for halting the modification policy, no other action will be effective.

Regarding development, first we consider development overall and independent in the sense that we do not merely think about economic development, and alongside it we pay attention to political development and cultural and social development as well. Development must be created in all these areas. Economic development without political development is meaningless and is not acceptable by any means. Without economic development, political development and cultural development are not possible. The second issue regarding development is the relationship of this issue with justice, which is studied a great deal today. Five or six years ago, none of those who had the motto of development — the majority faction in our Fourth Majles and other groups — discussed development and justice together. Fortunately, today all have reached the conclusion that at least in slogans the two should appear together, but I must point out that at the present time in connection with development and justice, three kinds of approaches are common.

The first approach is an accepted approach with a global formula that states: "Justice is not possible without development; hence, the country must first develop in order to achieve justice and if the country does not develop, the meaning of justice is the distribution of poverty." This viewpoint is the one that has governed the country for five or six years, and until two years ago, when tactical revisions were made in it. Of course, their model is the advanced industrial countries in which justice does not exist. Welfare and a minimum living exists, but they continue to be bipolar societies.

The second approach, considering the past few years and the pressure on the deprived in the society as a result of the wrong policies, is that we give up development altogether. We want justice. "Development only if justice is achieved." In other words, development is given secondary priority; that is, first justice is secured and, if possible, then development is pursued.

Our approach is contrary to both of these, and it is that justice and development must be "step by step, together, and alongside each other."

We believe that by controlling the resources and consumption, we will be able to spend the existing resources that in our opinion are acceptable on development and prevent inflation and injustice.

Iran: Majles Candidate Interviewed

96LA0247A Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Apr 96 p 10

[Interview with Engineer Soheyla Jelowdarzadeh, a candidate for the Fifth Majles, by Parvaneh Mohebbi of SALAM; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Boxed item] **Note — The extensive presence of women in the Fifth Majles election, both as voters and candidates, was very significant. This text is the result of an interview by SALAM with Engineer Soheyla Jelowdarzadeh, a candidate for the Fifth Majles. Ms. Jelowdarzadeh is now working in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and is the representative of the minister of labor on the Cultural and Social Council of Women and in the Office of Women's Affairs. She is also in charge of the Sisters' Center of the House of Workers and a member of the Central Council of Women. We call to your attention this interview.**

[Mohebbi] **I ask the first question regarding the political participation of women because in this term we have witnessed the significant increase in the number of female candidates. Even out of the two people who were able to receive a majority vote in Tehran, one is a woman. In your opinion, what factors have affected this issue? [end boxed item]**

[Jelowdarzadeh] As you know, prior to the victory of the revolution, religious and faithful women were less involved in the social activities available. Since the revolution, because of the appropriate environment, we have witnessed a great deal of interest, particularly in education and higher education. Fortunately, women have gained significant success in this area. Naturally, this increase in the level of awareness and participation in scientific and cultural issues created a potential on more complex levels. Hence, women not only at the public level but at the level of the elite, displayed their readiness for political presence and participation.

[Mohebbi] What about the perspective of men?

[Jelowdarzadeh] Regarding men, we face several perspectives. Some believe that women are the second sex and, in any case, must prepare the grounds for the growth of men. Another perspective encourages equal growth of women and men and equal participation. There is also a third perspective, which under the influence of the issues and existing international conditions superficially agrees to the participation of women, but is not very keen on the expression of opinions by women and does not take the issue seriously, similar to some of the other countries where they have a rubber stamp and display the advancement of women, this group also favors this approach.

[Mohebbi] What I mean is, what change took place in the perspective of men to make the presence of women more favorable?

[Jelowdarzadeh] The level of the thinking that women are the second sex decreased in the society and the reason is the increased level of awareness of women and their increased self-confidence, so that with their effective presence, they showed their competence and efficiency and isolated that kind of thinking somewhat. It should also be pointed out that the third kind of thinking may be the evolution of the first; for example, now that they have said they were left behind and driven away, they discuss the superficial presence of women.

[Mohebbi] Regarding the third kind of thinking, how should women, particularly female deputies, act?

[Jelowdarzadeh] A deputy must have good intentions. If she intends to serve the people to get closer to God, she will certainly act on the basis of her competence and drive away this kind of thinking from the scene. The way to fight this kind of thinking is to show one's abilities with complete self-confidence.

[Mohebbi] What motivates you to be present in this field of rivalry?

[Jelowdarzadeh] I specifically had two motives. One was a sense of duty in connection with the issues of women, and second, because the young generation sees so little of a full and comprehensive presence of women. In any case, the women whom have come to me regarding their legal and economic problems and jobs and even the cultural place of women in the society caused me to enter this arena.

[Mohebbi] How many came to you that motivated you to act?

[Jelowdarzadeh] Very many. In other words, in every session in which I participated, the session turned into complaints about the many problems still to be solved. The best way is for women to have political, effective, and useful power in order to be able to solve their problems. Prior to the revolution, our men had a positive role in the victory of the revolution and afterward in the process of resistance and development, but they have been less successful in achieving their just Islamic rights because for various reasons, they have rarely gone after their rights.

[Mohebbi] Considering what you have stated, to what issues should a woman deputy pay more attention?

[Jelowdarzadeh] The important thing is for the position of women to be clarified in the Islamic Republic, for its dimensions to be specified and introduced to the society. So far, good efforts are being made, but we cannot say that we have even come close to success because even though we have no obstacles in the offices for the job promotion of women, we see that despite the capabilities and competence of women, they are not given job promotions. Even in education, where half the personnel are women, women are not very successful in gaining positions, except for the educational units which have to make use of women. Such problems show that the place of women in equal conditions has not been clarified, and in the planning system and large-scale programs, gender relations planning has not been addressed. In other words, when women and men in the society are to make use of the general budget and allocations are made, men benefit most. Regarding women in the working society, we have particular problems which must be dealt with in the Majles, for example, retirement with 20 years of service for female workers. Of course, we have this serious demand on our agenda, and whether or not we are in the Majles, we will raise this issue again and again in order to achieve the demands of female workers, because this has been ratified with regard to female employees, and there is no reason why female workers cannot benefit from this law. Female workers endure double pressure; their work is physical and often after 20 years of work they are worn out. They have a good motto themselves: "Retire us 10 years before we die." This is based on the statistics of the Social Security Organization that show the age of death of workers is just such an average, and this situation is worse with regard to female workers who have double work. Another issue is the payment of regular pay to the children of retired or deceased women, because men and women pay the same amount of retirement fees. When a man dies, it is paid to his children, but when a woman dies, it is not paid.

[Mohebbi] Even if she does not have a husband?

[Jelowdarzadeh] If she does not, it is paid.

[Mohebbi] Perhaps this is because of what is said, that child support is the responsibility of the man and hence, there is no need for this payment.

[Jelowdarzadeh] This is not related to child support. Regarding a woman who has worked in accordance with a contract and has paid as much in retirement fees as a man, if the issue of child support is going to be raised, then the percentage of the retirement fee must be reduced. It is irrational for both to pay the same amount and then say that because the man is responsible for child support, we will not pay these payments to the children of deceased women. Child support is a duty that religion has conferred on the man. These two issues are not at all related.

[Mohebbi] In other words, you think that by increasing the number of female deputies, women will be able to achieve their rights?

[Jelowdarzadeh] If their number is greater, better conditions will be created. In any case, in the Majles every person has a vote, and I do not think that there is a woman in the Majles who would vote against the interests of women. Hence, the more women are present in the Majles, the more seriously efforts to achieve the rights of women and to change the laws that are deficient as well as to Islamicize the laws will be taken. Women who have the boldness to raise the issues should go to the Majles.

[Mohebbi] Even though each woman has one vote, we know that most of the activities are not carried out on the floor of the Majles but in the committees. Hence, do you not think that being efficient and effective is more important than increasing the number of deputies?

[Jelowdarzadeh] This is what I meant by boldness. In other words, knowing the problems and solutions, attempting to prepare the grounds, and having the ability to convince others, are all among the requirements of a good deputy, and this is true regarding all deputies, both men and women. If a deputy looks at her duty in this way, that she wants to remove a burden from the shoulders of the people and solve a problem, and does not consider the Majles and being a deputy as a position of authority, she will be able to deal with any problem. In that case, we do not see that as a result of considerations and other issues she would not be able to work and fail to have even a few half-baked proposals that are offered ratified.

[Mohebbi] You answered a part of the question of "What kind of a base can the Majles be for a female deputy?" which I intended to ask. If you have more to add, please tell us so that we can go to the other questions.

[Jelowdarzadeh] Many issues may not on the surface appear to be women's issues, but the consequences are endured by women. For example, the decisions that are made regarding the economy of a country seem to be general issues, but the most pressures resulting from the economic developments are endured by the women of the society, who are the main pillars of the family. In my opinion, a female deputy must first be active in all arenas of the Majles and look at the issues from the viewpoint of women. This is a general role. In this term of the Majles, though, she must also play a transitional role; that is, reform the laws inherited from the past. For instance, our women suffer many problems in connection with the civil laws and even sometimes prefer not to go after their rights.

[Mohebbi] Do you mean that the problems of women in our society are only legal problems?

[Jelowdarzadeh] They also are legal problems.

[Mohebbi] Do you not think that more than legal problems there are problems in implementing the laws?

[Jelowdarzadeh] In this connection, we offered a proposal to the Cultural and Social Council of Women regarding female advisors in the courts. Such support must be strengthened. Of course, there are also cultural problems and issues that must be solved by women themselves.

[Mohebbi] Let us talk about other issues. As everyone witnessed, in the first round of the elections, the two terms "development" and "social justice" could be heard in the campaigns of all candidates and groups. Before we ask the next question, please give us a brief definition of these two terms.

[Jelowdarzadeh] These issues are discussed in the society and the main reason is to take advantage of them in the elections because "development" is providing the suitable grounds for achieving general welfare, the index of which is the increase in the national revenues. "Social justice" also means the possibility of equal benefits from the existing resources of the society for everyone. In the actions of those who raise the motto of "social justice," much weakness can be seen. For example, the motto of "social justice" is raised, but is the use on the part of the media, such as the Voice and Vision, the same as that of those who have this motto? For four months, I have not had permission to even briefly pass by the Voice and Vision, but I see that gentlemen and ladies have had hour-long or half-hour programs to introduce themselves and even their families. "Social justice" is raised mostly as a political weapon because considering the high prices and the economic problems, it is a catchy slogan. People realize the depth of the issues and look to see whether or not the sharp edge of this motto is toward the economy and controlling the market, large-scale profiteering, and speculation. We think that "development" automatically brings along "social justice," and the closer we get to development, the more social justice will increase.

[Mohebbi] Does "development" only mean economic development?

[Jelowdarzadeh] This is the common understanding, and they say that a country is developed because its per capita income is the same amount. The more increase in this level, the more developed the country is. Naturally, when suitable conditions are provided in the country and Islamic revolutionary viewpoints govern the society, the cultural development that we have in mind — that is, for all the people to be pious slaves of God — will become possible. To achieve this, poverty must be eliminated, and to eliminate poverty, we must have a thriving economy. Those who discuss "social justice" prior to development state that we will slow down the speed of development to reach social justice. In my opinion, it is not necessary to discuss which is first and which is next. We can reach our goal simultaneously. If we have good control over the economy and the market is regulated properly in order to remove the political pressures that are imposed sometimes by the market and do not allow the programs to succeed, and at the same time have economic and industrial development, development and social justice will be achieved simultaneously. When even with a great deal of domestic production we are unable to control inflation, it is due to this very political pressure by the market because we have been unable to regulate the market simultaneously with production, and the open doors to foreign products have harmed the domestic industries. Hence, we see that before we reach the end of the four years, they are forced to change the policy. For example, when Sony and Samsung televisions enter the market, Pars Television, which is technologically perhaps 20 years behind, is harmed, followed by the unemployment of the workers and bankruptcy.

[Mohebbi] Considering your definitions of these two terms, if you enter the Majles as a deputy, what program will you have for achieving "development" and "social justice"?

[Jelowdarzadeh] At the present, I do not intend to make a claim because I am one person and we do not have a political party and strong political organization. In any case, we believe in a series of principles based on the last will and testament of the imam and the directives of the grand leader. I think insistence on these principles and moving other deputies in this direction in order to observe these principles in the legislation and planning will cause us to have good conditions once again. For example, economic independence and efforts to achieve self-sufficiency is one of these principles. Hence, we shall make an effort to ensure that all the laws that pass in the Majles guarantee these issues and take the society toward its goals.

[Mohebbi] How about in connection with reducing unemployment and controlling inflation?

[Jelowdarzadeh] In connection with these two, we have a plan. We have a plan both in connection with the employment of women, considering their characteristics and duties, and the young generation, appropriate with the existing conditions of the society. God willing, if we succeed, we shall strive to achieve them.

[Mohebbi] Could you explain further, because for every candidate to say that he or she has plans is not enough.

[Jelowdarzadeh] We believe that the creation of jobs does not necessarily require great investment. You yourself were in the Beijing Conference. You saw the people of China. The people of China do not have raw materials, mines, oil, and natural resources. Their greatest capital is their work organization and planning for their labor force. With labor planning and organization and rules to gain foreign markets, we can have the same role in gaining the world markets easily. To create jobs, we should not necessarily try to import advanced technology. We must look at our own capabilities. Importing robot technology for a country that has so many unemployed forces may not be feasible, and we may be forced to dismiss 1,000 workers from an electronics factory. Importing every robot creates jobs for several foreign workers. Sending foreign currency and domestic capital abroad is in the interest of other countries. By reviewing this issue, with little capital, we can create jobs for the unemployed. Even in connection with women's issues, I have conducted specific studies. We have more than 100 domestic production projects, and if we are able to provide government support and private sector funds, we will be able to create jobs and production in the homes.

[Mohebbi] In your statements, you point out that "a deputy must know all the issues and be aware of the problems of the day." This knowledge will certainly not be restricted to domestic issues, and foreign policy is not an exception. What is your opinion regarding foreign policy and the issue of negotiation with the United States, which is discussed sometimes?

[Jelowdarzadeh] We are proud that we have received our views from the imam. The imam said, why do we want to have relations with the United States? Relations with the United States is like relations between the wolf and the ram. The grand leader, too, stated that we shall not compromise with the United States for one moment (something close to this statement). These are our policies, and we think that a relationship with the United States is a relationship of domination, no matter with which country it has relations. Our nation offered so many martyrs to the revolution and Islam in order to rid itself of this relationship of domination. Not only the United States, but any country that wants to have a relationship of ruler and ruled with us will be subject to the same idea.

[Mohebbi] You mean political relations, do you not?

[Jelowdarzadeh] In my view, relations are condemned in any form. The purchasing of U.S.-made refrigerators from the middleman in the Persian Gulf sheikdom is just as condemned and heinous as political negotiations. In other words, when Islam says, "All the heathens are unclean," it covers all issues. When we establish economic relations, even indirectly, with the United States, it means that we have poured some of our revenues and capital into the pockets of the U.S. capitalists. This means we are strengthening the U.S. capitalists and severing our own roots.

[Mohebbi] Please give us an evaluation of the work of the deputies in the previous Majleses, particularly the Fourth Majles.

[Jelowdarzadeh] The First to the Third Majleses were active and made an effort. At that time, we had the war conditions and special political conditions, and the deputies of the people did their duties within their abilities. The Fourth Majles was faced with particular political conditions, and the friends in this Majles said that their Majles was an ethical one. For this reason, no critical issues were discussed. Teacher training students carried out a study examining the work of the Majles over a three-month period in 1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994]. I am speaking on that basis.

This study shows that about 65 percent of the Majles discussion were on social and cultural issues, about 23 percent economic issues, 1.3 percent political issues, and the rest were ceremonies and greetings. This study shows that at least in those three months, the Majles dealt very little with the political issues of the society. Depoliticization of a revolutionary society whose people must have a high level of knowledge of political issues is not in the interest of the regime and the revolution. I consider this issue as one of the main problems of the Fourth Majles. In this Majles, there were no conflicts of ideas, whereas issues that come to the Majles must be discussed, their advantages and disadvantages clarified, and then voted on justly and with regard to our interests in a suitable environment. We did not see such discussions in the Fourth Majles. The people's votes for the Fifth Majles also showed that they thought the same, and they have other expectations of the Majles. They do not want everyone to go and endorse each other and then say good-bye. Regarding the female deputies, too, we do not see any particular movement, and we did not even see them giving a good defense regarding the retirement of female workers.

[Mohebbi] What do you think was the reason?

[Jelowdarzadeh] Perhaps the lack of knowledge of some sisters regarding particular women's issues was the factor, because out of nine female deputies, three sisters were specialized in medicine and midwifery and the rest in cultural issues. However, one or several legal experts and a number of women specializing in planning, production, and industry are necessary for the Majles.

[Mohebbi] Then the problem was lack of specialization?

[Jelowdarzadeh] Lack of specialization and lack of contact. For example, the female deputies should be asked how many workshops and factories they each visited during their tenure, or, for instance, how many meetings they had, even with women in education, to see what their problems are.

[Mohebbi] Did the male deputies do so?

[Jelowdarzadeh] If there are 10 women, 50 percent of the society expects these 10 people to defend their rights, but men do not have this problem. Since prior to entering the Majles, women raise as one of their issues the solving of women's problems, the women in society expect that after they enter the Majles, they will take steps in this connection. One of the reasons that women's problems are not solved is because little time is spent on this matter. For example, why should the Family Committee proposal fail to receive a vote?

They should at least create the cultural background in the Majles and then bring forth the proposal. Unfortunately, we see that they did not even have a proposal to suggest the place of women in the society, and all the issues discussed concerned veiling. Veiling is a specific principle, and everyone observes it. Not all the messages on Muslim women concern veiling. Veiling is a requirement for the social participation of women. Seeing the woman only as a veiled being and nothing else is dangerous. Women have intelligence and minds and can give opinions.

[Mohebbi] As the last question, would you give us your evaluation of the first round of the Fifth Majles election?

[Jelowdarzadeh] We had very little possibility of contact with people because we do not have the Voice and Vision, the mosques, and schools at our disposal, and we do not even have sufficient money to inform the people about our views through media campaigns. In my opinion, conditions must be provided to ensure that the candidates are able to communicate with the people. Because of our kind of work and our relationship with people we are known, but there are candidates who are competent, who are independent, who do not have a lot of money to advertise, and who cannot get votes. If they could get votes and be discussed, it would be to the advantage of the society. Government and public resources must be placed equally at the disposal of candidates. What would be the problem of having meetings in the mosques? And when the qualifications of the candidates are verified by the Council of Guardians, there should be no obstacles for people to enter the mosques to introduce the candidates to the people because we consider ourselves the children of this revolution and think we should have this permission.

[Mohebbi] A question comes to mind here. In the first round, you received a high number of votes. Considering these votes, to which class in the society do you think you belong?

[Jelowdarzadeh] I consider myself the deputy of the revolution generation, the deputy of self-made women and men who heard the life-giving message of the imam, took their Islam from the imam, and made an eternal allegiance with the imam. This is what I think. I hope it is true.

Iran: GOZARESH Decries Inflation

96LA0219A Tehran GOZARESH in Persian No 58, Nov-Dec 95 pp 33-35

[FBIS Translated Text] **Inflation Even Resists the Punishment Lashes**

The new period of the implementation of the government punishment plan has reached a stage at which one can judge its effectiveness with regard to the general economy of the country and the purchasing power of the consumer masses.

Economists have written numerous articles regarding the contradictory nature of the strong supervision of the government over prices and regulating the free economy or market economy, which has been the basis for the economic planning of the country since 1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990], and have expressed different views. In this report, however, we do not intend to deal with such contradictions.

In this report, we will try to show the general views regarding the effects of the implementation of the punishment plan. To begin with, we will look at the official, controlled price of two major food items, meat and potatoes.

The price of mixed mutton in Mehr [23 September-22 October] in the Sepah Cooperative Stores was 7,000 rials [R] per kg, but from the start of Aban [23 October-21 November], it increased to R8,200. (During the same period, the price of mixed beef in these stores was R10,200.)

Until the end of Mehr, there were plenty of potatoes available, and the price per kg in the fruit and vegetable markets was R400-450. But the sale of potatoes in the markets suddenly stopped, and potatoes began to rank among the goods behind the counter. From then on, a person who wanted potatoes had to pay R1,000 per kg. This shortage and high price is while Mehr and Aban in our country are the seasons for buying potatoes for storage, and in the past years, their sale in these two months reached its height.

While the high price and shortage of potatoes continued, on 3 Aban [25 October], publishing the statistics that the production of potatoes in the current agricultural year is 3.2 million tons (equal to the level of production of last year), the Ministry of Agriculture announced the prohibition of their export until the end of this year [20 March 1996].

Despite the announcement of the prohibition of the export of potatoes, neither did the price decrease nor the amount increase. Why? The reason may be that a major portion of this product was exported, especially to the newly-independent countries in the north, prior to the announcement of the prohibition on its export. If not, the warehouses of the hoarders should have been discovered very quickly, its supply increased, and the prices declined. But it did not happen, and as this report is being prepared, potatoes continue to be expensive and in short supply, with their price even reaching R1,500 per kg.

Now, we raise the question: Why, in such a short interval, has the price of mixed mutton, in a store which is strongly supervised and controlled and carries the title of cooperative, increase by 19 percent?

The answer to this question must also be sought in the export of this item.

Note 54 of this year's budget law allows the government to issue permits for the export of 1.4 million heads of livestock (sheep and goats) from the country and in exchange for every sheep to collect R70,000 and for the export of every goat, R20,000 from the exporters. The aspiration of the Majles and the government from the implementation of this note is to acquire $112 million in foreign currency revenues.

The export of livestock is thriving so much that the permit for the export of one head of livestock alone increased up to R35,000. In other words, there were people — those close to the government — who would give 7,000 or 2,000 to the government and get a permit for one head of livestock, and then there were those who bought it from them at 3,500 tumans profit. Other reports also indicate that the profit on the permits for the export of one head of livestock has reached 7,000 tumans.

In a country that at the present time has to import at least 50,000 tons of meat to make up for its red meat deficit, how can the export of 1.4 million heads of livestock be justified?

No one knows the actual amount of potato and sheep and goat exports from the country, but even if the statistics are not available, the effects can be seen, and one could even guess that the price of meat and potatoes will reach new heights in the months of Bahman and Esfand 1374 and Farvardin 1375 [21 January-19 February, 20 February-19 March, and 20 March-19 April 1996].

Adding up these contradictions, can we expect miracles from the implementation of the punishment law?

High Prices Are Creeping, But Without a Pause

People read in the newspapers that even government-affiliated establishments and industries are prosecuted by the punishment officials and heavily fined. On the other hand, they see that the arrests and incarcerations not only do not control the prices, but the prices of various goods and services continue to creep up, without a pause, and inflation even resists the lashes of government punishment.

There is not a day on which reports of the high prices, shortages, and even scarcity of an item on the market are not given in the media. Car tires are not found, and the price of a pair of Peykan tires reaches about 43,000 [tumans]. Light bulbs are scarce, and a reporter of a monthly journal is forced to buy an ordinary bulb for R4,000. The price of an egg reaches R170, etc. Even the government itself increases some of the prices. For instance, the price of 1 kg of sugar cubes and sugar increased by R100.

We spoke with a group of government punishment officials and saw that they were sincere and serious in their work. Surprisingly, despite this behavior and despite the severity of the courts that implement the punishment law, the high prices are not under control and inflation continues.

The present situation seems strange if we do not take the contradictions into consideration, but if we look carefully at the duality of the behavior of the planning organizations of the government economic agencies, we will no longer be surprised.

We quote three reports from the newspapers on 04 and 06/08/1374 [26 and 30 October 1995] without any interpretation in order to understand some of these contradictions.

"The director general of Qatar Customs said that Iranian exports to Qatar in the 10 months of 1995 increased from 55 million Qatar rials to 75 million. (Each 3.6 Qatar rial is about one U.S. dollar.) Sheykh Faysal al-Thani added: A major portion of these goods, especially foodstuff and livestock, was exported from Bushehr to Qatar..."

"At the present, the Iran Vanet Factory delivers the single-cabin Mazda 1600 without a license plate for R49.6 million to customs, whereas the same vehicle with a license plate is sold for about R47.5 million on the market. Also, the Engine Power Company at the present sells a Vespa motorcycle assembled in Iran for R3.5 million on installment, whereas the same motorcycle is sold at R3.35 million on the market."

"Engineer Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh, the minister of industries, said: Industrial goods alone comprise 8 percent of the exports of the country, and this is while the share of industrial goods in the exports of the neighboring countries and the industrial countries is 70-90 percent."

The contradiction must be sought in such instances.

While in the course of the First and Second Plan, large amounts of foreign currency and rial investments were made for the development of the national industries, the share of industries in the export is only 8 percent, and the industries in order to survive are forced to sell at high prices, organize and operate a special system of dealership, and get to a point at which their selling price exceeds even that of the black market.

On the other hand, in order to fill the numbers in its revenue columns, the government is forced to encourage exports. Now, since industrial exports are not possible, we have raw materials and foodstuff. Is the important thing to export goods and get foreign currency? Does the foreign currency from these exports really come back to the country? It has not in the past years. God willing, under the auspices of the implementation of the economic programs this year, the foreign currency gained from the export of potatoes, meat, and raw materials will be returned to the national economy.

What Is the People's Judgment?

The points that were refereed to up to here in this report are related to the general policies of the national economy and the contradictions and confusion in the behavior of the economic policy making organizations and institutions and the operational problems of the large economic agencies, especially in the government sector.

Throughout the society, we encounter various judgments and reflections. Wholesalers judge the results of the government punishments in one way and ordinary people in another way. On the whole, all of them believe that the implementation of the punishment law not only does not ameliorate the increasing inflammation of the inflation and high prices but in some instances causes the intolerable scarcity and high prices of some of the goods.

In conversations with various people, we asked them three questions:

1. What is your opinion regarding the results of the government punishment plan?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this plan, in your opinion?
3. What do you suggest to eliminate the disadvantages of the plan and its effective and efficient implementation?

We report the answers without any commentary or judgment and hope that certain points can be deduced from them to improve the work of the decisionmakers regarding the national economy and also the implementors of the government punishment plan.

A fabric wholesaler, whose store is on Vali-ye 'Asr Street between Vali-ye 'Asr Square and Jomhuri Intersection, says: The principle is fine, of course, if it is implemented properly. In my opinion, the most important duty of the punishment officials is control and supervision over the prices of production companies, whereas they mostly control the stores and agencies throughout the city. As a result, the producers deliver fewer goods to the stores and sell most of their products to middlemen. Their reason for doing so is that they have invested a great deal, and the official prices are not be feasible for them. In this situation, we are also forced to go to the middlemen to buy, and the result is what you see: the high price of goods.

A seller of household appliances on Jomhuri Street says: If we look at this issue fully, we see that this plan has had the reverse effect (especially regarding some items) on the market, in that the prices have increased by 100-120 percent compared to last year.

Goods for which the Punishment Office sets prices (such as Pars and Shahab televisions) usually become scarce, and their sale is handled in secret and at higher prices. This process has made the people suspicious, and some think that these measures are also a policy to raise the prices.

**One consumer begins his statement with this poem:
When the mason places the first brick crooked
The wall will be crooked to the sky.**

Government punishments do not deal with the person who steels the orchard; it arrests the one who steels an apple. As you see, with the implementation of this plan, not only have the prices not remained stable, but they have increased excessively. In addition, some of the goods have become quite scarce and expensive, such as butter, which apparently is not available in any of the food stores, but is kept in the warehouses and sold to private customers at two to three times the main price with a great deal of favoritism.

Another household appliance wholesaler says: If the government punishments are implemented properly and in their true sense (which they are not), they are fine. The duty of the Punishment Office is to supervise and prosecute and not interfere in the work of others. For example, a wholesaler invests to purchase an item. At the time of delivery, the punishment official arrives and says: I will sell it myself. If they want to sell it themselves, let them make investments themselves, too. Hence, the principle of control and supervision must not be mistaken with interference. Most importantly, the behavior of government officials must be dignified and not autocratic. A punishment official is a government employee and does his duty, and he can only supervise and prosecute. If supervision continues in its present form, few wholesalers will agree to let their money lie there in the factories and will prefer to invest their money in imported goods. The government must provide the producers with resources and then expect them to obey the set prices. In other words, the government must change its various production programs and create the necessary coordination among them. Moreover, control and supervision must be constant, whereas most of these plans are temporary, which solve no problems. On the whole, because of the lack of coordination and the weakness of the implemented laws, producers resist the government and sell most of their products to middlemen.

A consumer who is a female employee said: This plan has caused a series of negative results, which include the shortage of such items as sugar cubes and sugar. On the other hand, every day, we witness the rise in prices, especially fruits, such that fruits have become luxury items and are kept behind windows, and most people cannot afford them. Of course, it is said that the uncontrolled increase in the prices of fruits is due to uncalculated exports.

A grocer said: The implementation of the punishment law was useful for our guild, because when a customer complains about the high prices of goods, we say it is the price set by the Punishment Office. But if we look at the issue from the standpoint of principles, we see that the situation has not changed at all. This situation proves that in any action, especially in this connection, fundamental and rooted steps must be taken. In order to destroy a rotted tree, it must be cut from the root. Cutting the branches and leaves will not be enough. Merely controlling the work of the retailers will not solve any problem, because the problem comes from the roots.

The owner of a clothing production and supply store said: The punishment officials have so far come to our place of work three times and checked the prices with the receipts. They insist on putting price labels on goods, and we do this. But we buy the material we need at high prices, so naturally, we also sell at higher prices. The problem is not caused by us. Rather, the main problem is somewhere higher up. The punishment officials have abandoned the cause and are pursuing the effect, and the result, as you see, is the reverse effect of this plan, because since last year in our line of work (clothing), prices have increased by 80 to 120 percent. The price of a jacket which was 4,000 tumans last year has now reached 10,000 tumans.

A tool wholesaler said: Because none of these and similar plans are basic and fundamental, they do not solve any problem, since everyone takes his own interests into consideration. The producer, wholesaler, and retailer do the same; no regulations govern them; everyone thinks about his own interests only and does not think about the long-term collective interests. For example, in our line of work (tools), where the volume is small and the prices high, we bought one metal item at 60 tumans and sold it at 90 tumans, but the government has recently prohibited its import, and as a result the goods have gone to the warehouses and are sold secretly at several times the original price. In any case, businessmen do not suffer losses. Only the consumers end up with the results of all these plans and programs.

Let Us Not Mistake Painkillers for Medicine

The viewpoints of the masses of consumers, small retailers, and wholesalers are more or less what was stated above. The owners and managers of industries, too, have opinions and rationales that, on the whole, show the belief that the implementation of the punishment plan is not the main treatment for inflation and high prices.

The fact that must not be ignored is that, at the beginning of this year, the economic situation of the country had reached a point that, except for the implementation of a plan such as the punishment plan, no other solution to slow down the uncontrolled inflation would come to the minds of the designers and implementors of the national economy.

The effects of this plan can be understood when we remember that in the early months of those years the prices were climbing rapidly and what direction the situation was heading. Hence, its implementation as a temporary solution seemed inevitable, but only as a temporary solution...or a painkiller to kill the pain resulting from a difficult illness.

Now, the effects of this pain killer are gradually disappearing. The prices are reaching an almost intolerable level even for people with relatively high incomes. These high prices on the one hand and the shortages on the other will have destructive effects on the general economy of the country that will be at times irreparable.

The relative pause resulting from the implementation of the punishment plan in the past months should not ease the minds of the economic officials of the country, but it is necessary for them, in order to treat the economic ills of the country, to try to find an effective medicine as well and inject such medicine into the economic vein.

However, it seems that no one has taken steps to search for this medicine...and perhaps the level of prices will remain at their present level.

The speed of the increase in prices has been so fast that it is reminiscent of the early months of this year. The only difference between the present situation and the early months of this year can be seen in the relative pause in the price of foreign currency and gold. In those months, the pivotal point of comments was inflation and the hourly increase of the price of foreign currency and gold. Now, the most urgent and indispensable needs of the public are the target of the aggression of inflation.

If government punishments were to be implemented much more severely than they are now, but other factors that feed the giant of inflation are ignored, we must expect the uncontrolled speed in the rise of the prices to continue in future months. By that time, government punishments will not even have the effect of a painkiller.

Shortage of Cash Flow: Speculations and Decrease in Production

The shortage of saplings compared to the demand in the market is among the main reasons for inflation and the creation of the black market, in which the severity of demand determines the prices and not the officially ratified rates.

The balance between supply and demand is established when the capacity of production of every item is relatively compatible with its consumption, and producers are not faced with problems and production shortages either. But it seems that under the present conditions, a number of our industries are facing serious problems in the area of procuring raw materials, and this is one of the factors that reduce the effectiveness of punishments or makes them ineffective with regard to the giant of inflation.

As an example, various types of vehicle tires are scarce in the market, and in the black market, as well, they are sold at much higher rates than the ratified rates. Should the responsibility for this shortage and high prices all be placed on those active in the black market?

The deputy director of the Yazd Tire Industries Complex Company, which is supposed to be the largest tire factory in the Middle East, 75 percent of whose shares belong to the National Industries Organization and the remaining 25 percent to the Sepah Bank, said:

"This unit now has the problem of a shortage of cash flow, and if bank loans for the procurement of raw materials next year are not provided, it will face problems. The Ministry of Industries has allocated $11 million for the obligations of this company this year in the area of tire production, whereas this unit, because of lack of financial ability, is unable to provide this foreign currency."

We will look at two other instances:

The general manager of Yazd Setareh-ye Kavir Machine-Made Carpets said:

"The shortage of cash flow and imported raw materials has caused this company to use less than 50 percent of its production capacity.

"The shortage of cash flow in the Mahdi Porcelain Factory has caused the exclusive sale of 75 percent of the products of this unit to a wholesaler.... The general manager of Mahdi Porcelain Factory said that because of the shortage of cash flow, it signed the above-mentioned contract and agreed to give

75 percent of its total production for three years exclusively to a wholesaler in the Tehran Bazaar, in order for him to supply other sellers with these products."

The search for the root of inflation in the lack of ratified prices or price hiking by a number of profiteers is nothing but a waste of time and ultimately will have no effect but a short-term pause in some of the prices (as we have witnessed in practice).

When a factory which is 100 percent affiliated with the government has no cash flow to produce at full capacity, the results are bound to be more demand than supply and ultimately making the grounds favorable for those active in the black market.

Also, when an industrial unit which is forced to give 75 percent of the production of its next three years exclusively to one rich dealer is hoping for the effectiveness of the punishment whip, this is self-deception.

Iran: BBC's 'Malicious' Analysis of Maneuvers Cited

NC0806182696 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 25 May 96 pp 1, 11

[Political commentary: "The Smell of the Battle Front Is Tormenting the Enemies' Nostrils"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The construction of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad by Iranian experts and specialists, without foreign assistance, dazzled the eyes of the people of the world and compelled them to admit the Iranians' determination and national will for construction. Similarly the massive Velayat maneuvers, staged by the combatants of the ground forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also filled their eyes — especially military experts and observers — with wonder.

The Velayat maneuvers demonstrated the superb strength of the armed forces and the rare and flawless operational coordination between the air and ground forces, along with the latest warfare techniques and the utilization of the most sophisticated armaments. Once again the bond of faith and the military efficiency of the Iranian combatant forces was displayed.

In these maneuvers, the valiant ones endowed with the experiences of the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war and swathed in the aura of the hallowed battle fronts imparted their experiences to the younger soldiers and taught them the lessons of gnosis and jehad. By staging these massive military maneuvers that are unique in the world as regards the number of troops, the magnitude of operations, and the kind of weaponry used, the Islamic Republic of Iran proved to the enemies of the nation and the Iranian Revolution that to deal a blow and violate the boundaries of Islamic Iran is not possible and would have extremely painful repercussions for the aggressor.

For the friends of Iran and the Islamic Revolution, the maneuvers conveyed a message that Iran's military strength and capability is at the service of the defense of the great Revolution and Islamic values.

Despite the above, as had been predicted earlier, these maneuvers elicited a negative reaction and apprehension from various circles and governments. Even though military maneuvers are staged for preserving and maintaining the defense capability of the armed forces in every country, the staging of any kind of military maneuvers by Iran always generates fear and a plethora of strange and weird (!) analyses of ulterior motives in the mass media and in U.S. and Zionist political circles.

Most times of the year neighboring countries, even the diminutive littoral shaykhdoms of the Persian Gulf, carry out joint maneuvers with the United States and European countries on various pretexts. Of course, not a single political circle or media interprets these maneuvers as a military threat against their neighbors. However, the case is always the opposite with regard to Iran!

This time as well, U.S. political and military authorities, the Zionist regime, as well as Western media affiliated with Zionism disseminated numerous analyses stating that Iran is pursuing threatening objectives.

The U.S. Secretary of State asserted that Iran is training terrorists on its soil. A high level U.S. military official also stated that Iran is in the process of manufacturing a missile that can target Europe! An American publication even published details of Iran's military capability. The most interesting, and at the same time most malicious interpretation and analysis, was the one carried by the BBC. This radio attempted to capitalize on these maneuvers — in which complex defense operations were performed with live ammunition and masses of troops displayed their swiftness and prowess in a hypothetical battle — to project Iran's internal situation as turbulent.

In its commentary, BBC radio stated: "The Iranian armed forces, every once in a while, stage military maneuvers in the Persian Gulf waters. The presence of U.S. forces and warships in this region is a constant source of concern for Iran. However, the Velayat maneuvers were staged in the area south of the Iranian capital so that their closeness to Tehran, in conditions when internal differences and the tussle in the government has escalated, generate a greater feeling of tension in Tehran!"

It is not known between whom these internal differences or tussles are and in what part of Iran have they occurred that Iranians themselves cannot see them! The fact is that whenever Iran has staged maneuvers in the countries border areas, such as the Persian Gulf, these media and political circles have always interpreted them as a threat to neighbors. Now that these military maneuvers are being staged deep within Iranian soil, such a rationale having been extorted by Western political circles and media, these maneuvers are now being attributed to internal problems and what the BBC describes as domestic tension!

The fact is that the absence of any domestic tension in Iran is the greatest and most important problem for the United States and the Zionist regime. Hence, the affiliated media is constantly seeking an opportunity to create conditions for fomenting tension inside Iran.

What is quite evident in Iran is the Islamic and national solidarity that exists among all sections of people for the construction of the country and safeguarding national unity. A prominent example is the grand interment ceremonies held for the 800 martyrs of the imposed war by the wonderful people of Tehran.

The grand display of the "Velayat" military maneuvers are in fact a special response to the enemies of the revolution and the system and one should state: A realistic interpretation of the analyses propounded by Western circles would be that the enemies of the Islamic Revolution and nation are infuriated and perturbed by every kind of powerful move by Iran or a display of its political, economic, and military prestige. This is especially since the Islamic Republic of Iran — in contrast to other countries in the region which depend on foreigners, especially the United States — relies solely on its own technical prowess, its capable human resources, and stages its military exercises and maneuvers with live ammunition. The swiftness, scale of operations, technical precision, level of troop participation, and mutual coordination among the various forces were exemplary and unique in the world according to military experts.

Iran: F-7 Engine Ground Test Device Built

96LA0228A Tehran SAFF in Persian
No 189, 21 Jan-20 Feb 96 pp 28-29

[FBIS Translated Text] The Public Relations Office of the Air Force Ideological Political Directorate of the Iranian Army reports that the ground test module for the motors in the F-7 is a more complete ground simulation of the aircraft's cabin, in which are installed all the necessary indicators and parameters for checking the aircraft's motor. This system helps technical specialists to ensure that there are no fuel or oil leaks in the motor before they mount it in the aircraft. In addition to showing fuel and oil consumption per minute, the system's other measurement capabilities include rotary compression, exhaust pressure, propeller vibration, motor pulling power, and the pressure of the various oil and gas pumps. It can also bring these things into conformity with international standards through an operating system that resembles the workings of the pilot's cabin.

This tester, which was designed and built through the extraordinary around-the-clock efforts of Air Force specialists and at a cost of less than one-third of its foreign counterpart, is another step toward self-sufficiency for the Islamic nation. Its construction prevents the spending of $35 million in foreign exchange.

It is worth mentioning that the F-7 motor can operate for more than 200 hours, and basic repairs must be made with foreign internal parts. After the parts are washed with chemicals, sterilized, and searched for cracks and single-use parts are replaced, the motor is inspected and tested. The commander of the jet motor's maintenance facility says in this regard: "In the beginning we had no technical publications on the parts or any book on this type of motor. Therefore, after building appropriate tools for the arrangement and sequence of the parts, we were able to prepare technical books and publications for this type of motor for use in subsequent stages and for personnel training."

F-7 Aircraft's Characteristics

The F-7 Tactical Fighter Aircraft became a part of Iran's Air Force in 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]. It is one of the most advanced single-engine attack aircraft of its kind. This aircraft is built by the King Company of China. It has two models: the single-cabin tactical aircraft and the dual-cabin training aircraft. The flight ceiling of this type of aircraft is 60,000 feet, and its speed at high altitudes is 1,200 km per hour. The motor for this type of aircraft is a turbojet with power of G100kg in condition A/B. There are 23- and 30-millimeter cannon installed in the wing tips, and both models are equipped with MK-82 and MK-84 bombs mounted beneath the fuselage. The aircraft can also carry an assortment of rockets and 75-millimeter missiles.

A system of braking parachutes in the aircraft's tail permit it to land and take off on short air strips.

It is necessary to note that the inaugural ceremonies for the F-7 motor's testing system were attended by Brigadier General Baqa'i, commander of the Air Force, a group of commanders, and several clergy from the Ideological Political Directorate. Brigadier General Baqa'i, commander of the Air Force, said the work done to achieve Air Force self-sufficiency has been quite positive, and he praised and thanked the insiders and technical personnel for their efforts.

Iran: Gang Members Arrested for Smuggling, Forging Documents

LD1106102696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 6 Jun 96 pp 3,13

[Unattributed article: "Gang Members Arrested"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Members of a smuggling and forging gang who abused and forged identification cards and documents introducing themselves as members of the Information (Intelligence) Ministry, were identified and a number of them were arrested.

According to 'SALAM' newspaper, they had been referring to the southern ports and taken illegal actions interfering in customs affairs.

Quoting the ministry's public relations office, the paper wrote: "According to reports received from the people, [the] activities of some members of the grouplets — who had been abusing the local smugglers in the field of smuggling drugs and transport of explosives — were identified and the said gang was smashed."

The Intelligence Ministry offered a picture of one of the active members of the gang to the press asking the "Hezbbollah nation" to report to the ministry any information or complaints.

Iran: Marine Characteristics of Persian Gulf

96LA0232B Tehran SAFF in Persian No 192, 21 Apr-20 May 96 pp 14-15

[FBIS Translated Text] [Boxed item] **Knowing about the resistance of teakwood, the intelligent Iranians had made use of underwater hills and rocks to build towers and special signals in the sea that could withstand the bitter, salty water of the sea for many years.** [end boxed item]

The writings of our predecessors are true evidence that sea signals are among the oldest human inventions, and the innovations of intelligent sea-faring Iranians have continued to be used up to today.

Lanterns, caves, floodlights, and sea signals, both those installed along the shores, ports, and heights on the islands and those installed in the waters of the Persian Gulf, are extremely important and effective for protecting ships and other sea vessels from accidents and sinking and in particular the safety of sailors.

In ancient times, our intelligent compatriots had installed signals on all the coasts, ports, and islands and even in the sea waters to guide the ships and boats, especially to prevent the sinking of vessels at night, that were very effective in protecting the vessels and sailors and preventing pirates and surprise attacks on the shores by enemies.

The above signals were built on the shores, on the highest points of fortresses, hills, and mountains facing the sea with the use of rocks and mortar, and people were assigned to light fires in them in order for the ships in the farthest points at sea to identify the shore and hasten to it.

The intelligent Iranians also, by making use of underwater hills and rocks and their knowledge of the astonishing resistance of teakwood, which is a native tree to the forests of India, had built towers and special signals on the sea that could survive for many years in the bitter, salty waters of the sea, which soften and crush hard iron and steel in a short period of time.

In addition to the above signals, Iranian sailors built dome-covered water reservoirs and high fortresses and buildings and even built their sacred places for "pilgrimage" on the hills and high places to guide the ships in the waters in daytime. Such signals can now be seen in various parts of our shores, ports, and islands.

Lighthouses were erected with the use of huge pieces of teakwood and large pieces of other woods which resisted the salty sea water. The choice of Indian teakwood in the sea was a proper and calculated choice.

Today, too, shipbuilders of the islands of Kang, Qeshm, Langeh, Bushehr, and other areas of the Persian Gulf built the lower parts of their boats that float in sea water or are in contact with salty water from very strong jungle and teakwood.

According to Naser Khosrow, the highest parts of the towers were 40 yards [gaz] above sea level. If every "gaz," which is a measure of length, is calculated to be about one meter, the highest of these lighthouses were 40 meters above the level of the water, and certainly several meters were underwater.

Procuring and transporting such huge and heavy wood and also erecting and installing it in various parts of the Persian Gulf required advanced technology, knowledgeable engineers, experienced divers, precise equipment and tools, and also full understanding of the sea and the sea floor, particularly the level of ebb and flow, sea storms, and familiarity with seasonal winds and their direction, as well as many other marine issues.

Today, with all the advancement in industry and technology, still the installation of such wooden posts on the underwater rocks and hills and on the sea floor is very difficult and exhausting work, which not everyone can do. This shows the greatness of the work and willpower of the Iranians of ancient times, and their full understanding of the Persian Gulf.

Building wooden cabins at a height of 40 meters on the sea towers and also insulating them with terra cotta and various inflammable materials at the time and burning fire at that height without damaging the cabin and the structure required special techniques and advanced equipment, in addition to intelligence.

Erecting all those lighthouses in various areas of the Persian Gulf and also stationing so many people on them and the problems of feeding and traffic and providing fuel for the lights required precise organization, amazing order and discipline, and the establishment of regular marine services and extensive around the clock services.

The issue of installation of mirrors in the lanterns was apparently mentioned by Naser Khosrow about 1,000 years ago in his travel memoirs. This book indicates that the installation of mirrors in lighthouses and also the use of mirrors for transmitting light to the vast area of waters were among the innovations of Iranians, and today's advanced lighthouses are built using those primitive methods used in the lighthouses of ancient Iranians.

The sea-faring Iranians installed lighthouses in the dangerous areas and also in places where the passage of ships was not dangerous.

Iran: Jan-Feb SAFF News, Events Reported

96LA0230A Tehran SAFF in Persian
No 189, Jan-Feb 96 pp 55-59

[FBIS Translated Text] The ceremonies presenting Hojjat ol-Eslam Mo'in-Shirazi as the acting commander of the Political-Ideological Organization of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran were held concurrent with the birth anniversary of His Holiness Aba 'Abdollah al-Hoseyn and Revolutionary Guards Day. The ceremonies were attended by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Quchani, the respected chief of the Political-Ideological Organization of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Brigadier General Heydari, deputy commander of the Joint Staff for coordination; Brigadier General Dadbin, commander of the infantry; Brigadier General Baqa'i, commander of the Air Force; Hojjat ol-Eslam Imani, Shahidi, Ahmadvand, and Movahedi-Golpaigani, the chiefs of the Infantry, Air Force, Navy,.and Joint Staff political-ideological offices, respectively; and a large number of clergy and military personnel.

In these ceremonies, after the reading of several verses from the glorious words of God, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Quchani, chief of the Army Political-Ideological Organization, said in a speech: Since society consists of various and numerous individuals with limited abilities extracted from the infinite and eternal abilities of the One, God gives blessings to each individual based on his capacities, and it is on this basis that he demands from him his duties and responsibilities.

He added: No individual in society has the ability alone to do his duty and carry out his responsibilities unless there are specialists working with him, so that, helping one another, they will be able to bring all of their heavy burdens to their objectives.

Elsewhere in his talk, he said: It is necessary that we all join hands to bring the Islamic revolution, this divine gift, to its destination. Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Quchani added: It is true that the imam (peace be upon him) was the standard-bearer of this revolution, but if it had not been for the national support of this heroic nation, this revolution clearly would not have been realized. Likewise, if the nation had been without a leader, this revolution would not have been victorious.

Elsewhere in his speech, the chief of the organization discussed the fact that the sacred Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been able, under the leadership of the exalted commander of the armed forces, to carry out its great mission. He added: Along with the Armed Forces, especially the Army, this organization and sacred ideological-political body was established by order of the late imam. During the 17 years since the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, it has always worked to the limit of its ability, and the results of the labors of this organization's clergy, military people, and staff are evident. Thus, to move toward greater perfection, we need to make use of coordinated organizations and at the same time of successful and pious leadership.

After the speech by the chief of the Army Political-Ideological Organization, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mo'in-Shirazi gave a short speech in which he advised the political-ideological organizations to continue working to implement the commands of the exalted commander in chief of the armed forces.

Brief Biography of Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mo'in-Shirazi

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mo'in-Shirazi was born in 1322 [21 March 1943-20 March 1944] to a scholarly family in Tehran's Darbandsar district. He studied the classics through secondary school, and at the same time he took seminary training with his great father.

After completing his classical studies, he continued with seminary studies for 23 years at the seminaries in Qom, Tehran and Noble Najaf. He studied with professors such as Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him) and Grand Ayatollah Kho'ei, and then he taught seminary classes at the elementary and sufficiency levels.

When he became familiar with his holiness the imam's (peace be upon him) revolutionary thinking, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mo'in-Shirazi began his struggles against the shah along with the other revolutionary classes of people. While taking part in the printing and distribution of statements and announcements from the great leader of the Islamic revolution, he was arrested in Mashhad in the year 1343 [21 March 1964-20 March 1965] and imprisoned along with His Holiness Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, the exalted leader of the Islamic Revolution.

After the triumph of the Islamic revolution of Iran, he worked in numerous occupations, the latest of which was his responsibility as acting chief of the political-ideological office of the exalted commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

Repair and Maintenance Center Inspected

The Public Relations Office of the Infantry Political-Ideological Directorate reports that Brigadier General Dadbin, commander of the Infantry, inspected the Infantry Repair and Maintenance Center and the 22 Bahman [11 February] Residential Project, which is ready to be used.

Based on the same report, Brigadier General Dadbin gave a speech in which he thanked and praised those working on this project. He said: Just as we were victorious in the war, we are also proud today during the reconstruction. The Army too, along with the nation's other organizations and bodies, is actively rebuilding this land.

During this inspection, Brigadier General Niazi, commander of Infantry Repair and Maintenance, presented a report on the reconstruction in this center.

It is worth mentioning that the Army Infantry Repair and Maintenance Command has rendered valuable services before and after the imposed war in starting and reusing equipment, machinery and vehicles. This center's most recent measures include the construction of 156 housing units within seven months.

Ceremonies Commemorating Martyr Mohammad 'Ali Nazaran

To commemorate the position and services of Martyr Mohammad 'Ali Nazaran, former chief of the General Intelligence Office of the Armed Forces Command Staff and the chief of the prisoners commissions, ceremonies were held attended by Major General Firuzabadi, chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Safa'i, chief of the exalted commander in chief of the Armed Forces' Political-Ideological Directorate, the Chief of the Supreme Islamic Revolutionary Council of Iraq, the family of Martyr Nazaran, and army and national officials.

During these ceremonies, Brigadier General Najafi, chief of the Armed Forces Command General Office of Security and Intelligence, enumerated Martyr Nazaran's characteristics and qualities. He said. That high ranking martyr's activities were based on taking an Islamic and humane approach toward Iraqi prisoners based on the imam's policies and measures, and those of the exalted leader. Elsewhere in his talk he said: Martyr Nazaran used all resources to liberate Iranian prisoners, and the fruit of these efforts was the return of proud liberated prisoners to their country.

This report states that as the ceremonies to honor Martyr Nazaran continued, Major General Firuzabadi said in his speech that this great martyr was the personification of piety, obedience to the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult and the imamate, and a powerful arm of the exalted supreme command of the armed forces.

Likewise in these ceremonies Martyr Mohammad 'Ali Nazaran's image and position were revealed, and the name of the Tehran Heshmatieh Garrison was changed to the Martyr Nazaran Garrison. At the end of these ceremonies, a memorial plaque was given to Martyr Nazaran's family by the Armed Forces Command General Office of Security and Intelligence and the Prisoners Commission.

MIG-29 Pilot Mastery Graduation Celebration

The graduation ceremonies for the Fifth Pilot Mastery Cycle for the MIG-29 and the Tajasos and Nejat helicopters were held at Mehrabad Air District Headquarters, attended by Brigadier General Rostami, acting commander of the Army Air Force, several commanders and pilots, and also a number of ideological-political clergymen.

During these ceremonies the acting commander of the Army Air Force gave a speech in which he offered thanks for the labor and efforts of insiders and professors, saying that the activities carried out were very positive.

Likewise, the Mehrabad Air District Fighter Brigade deputy commander for logistics discussed the activities of the Reconstruction Crusade. He said: Under current circumstances, all of this force's existing aircraft and helicopters have undergone basic repairs through the concern and effort of Air Force specialist personnel.

Based on the same report, at the end of these ceremonies the Pilot Master Medal was issued to fighter pilots and honorary plaques were given to outstanding personnel.

Seventh Free-Fall Parachuting Cycle

The seventh free-fall parachuting cycle, named after Martyr Rostami, was held at the 55th Shiraz Infantry Airborne Brigade, attended by the three forces of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this cycle, which took about three months, a total of 798 jumps were made from C-130 aircraft and helicopters. Ultimately 20 individuals succeeded in obtaining jump certification from the 55th Airborne Brigade. This cycle's characteristics included the use of parachutes made in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which were used for the first time.

Based on the same report, the first, second, and third ranked participants in the 60 second free-fall jump were:

1. First Lieutenant Mohammad Reza Rahimi;
2. Third Naval Navigator Mohammad Bayati;
3. Second Lieutenant Reza Imani.

Outstanding Students Praised

During ceremonies held by the Political-Ideological Directorate of the 30th Division of Gorgan, praise was given to 500 outstanding children of the Gorgan 30th Division personnel.

These ceremonies were attended by the children of the personnel at bases in Gorgan, Sari, Gonbad, and Bojnurd. This exercise was carried out to increase the morale of the outstanding students who are children of infantry personnel. At the end of the ceremonies gifts were given to them as official mementos.

Navy Climbers Scale Mount Taftan

On the occasion of 7 Azar [28 November], Navy Day, and also on the occasion for commemorating the memory of the immortal martyrs of the Peykan Naval Vessel, a navy climbing team succeeded in climbing Mount Taftan in Sistan va Baluchestan.

Martyred Air Force Guidance Commanders Honored

The Public Relations Office of the Air Force Political-Ideological Directorate reports that ceremonies honoring Martyr Major General Sattari, commander of this force, and his other comrades in arms, were held at the Prophet (peace be upon him) Mosque at the Air Force Staff.

Based on the same report, these ceremonies were attended by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi-Golpaigani, representative of the exalted leader, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Nateq-Nuri, speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles, Major General Shahbazi, chief of the Joint Staff of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemini Quchani, chief of the Army Political-Ideological Organization, a group of clergymen, high ranking commanders in the Armed Forces, and also the exalted families of martyrs. The speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles praised the sacrifices of the martyred Air Force commanders during the eight years of the sacred defense. He said: Air Force performance during the period of the triumph of the Islamic revolution and the eight years of the sacred defense is a record of pride for the nation and the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Elsewhere in his talk he said: At the peak of the popular struggle, the Army Air Force helped the Islamic Revolution, and in parading before his holiness the imam (peace be upon him) on 19 Bahman 1357 [8 February 1979], the Air Force declared its loyalty to that holy man as commander of all the Armed Forces, and this declaration of loyalty shows the depth of the belief by Air Force personnel and the depth of the late imam's movement.

Then Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri praised the exalted martyred Air Force Commanders and other martyrs in this force. He said: These dear ones were outstanding examples of committed specialists. They proved all those people wrong who said that commitment and specialization do not go together, and they proved that religion and politics are not separate.

Based on the same report, the ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom anniversary of Martyr Major General Pilot Mostafa Ardestani, held at this martyr's grave at the shrine of Emamzadeh Ja'far, took place in the city of Pishva, with extensive attendance by the people of this city.

Likewise, in gratitude for this high ranking martyr's services and epic exploits, the boulevard entering the city of Pishva was named after Martyr Ardestani.

Desert Foot Race Held

The championship desert foot races for infantry units were held, with the participation of 400 contestants on 24 teams, hosted by the 92d Armored Division.

In this competition, which was held on an 8 km course, 'Abbas Bandani from the 30th Gorgan Division took first place, Mohammad Yulameh from the Army Air Command took second place, and Hasan Mehrangiz from the 64th Urmia Division took third place.

Before the race began, the participants took part in ceremonies attended by commanders, officials, teachers, and athletes, and the graves of the martyrs were strewn with flowers.

Climb by Wounded Veterans

The Public Relations Office of the Infantry Political-Ideological Organization reports that a team of wounded veteran mountain climbers from the 88th Zahedan Division, along with another climbing team from this municipality, succeeded in climbing Mount Sablan and mounted the flag of the 88th Division at the top.

Iran: Head of Political Ideology Interviewed

96LA0233A Tehran SAFF in Persian
No 192, 21 Apr-20 May 96 pp 4-5

[Interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam Quchani, director of the Political Ideology Organization, by SAFF; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Boxed item] **Prosperity in this and the next world, brightness of the heart, success in life, the descending of good, and the ejection of calamities all can be achieved under the benefits of the Koran, and this important matter requires preparation, such as familiarity with the Koran, understanding Koranic concepts, and practicing the instructions of God's word.**

Accomplishing this grave task throughout the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the responsibility of the "House of the Koran" of the Political Ideology Organization. This unit, by spreading the Koranic perspectives in the areas of ideological, moral, social, political, and military areas, strives to make the military personnel and the members of their families as familiar as possible with the Koranic culture.

To learn more about the role of this unit, we held a brief interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam Quchani, the honorable director of the Political Ideology Organization, which follows: [end boxed item]

[SAFF] What is the goal of establishing an independent unit called the House of the Koran?

[Quchani] In the name of God, the compassionate, and the merciful: Greetings to His Holiness the Imam of the Age (may his coming be expedited); greetings to the pure souls of the martyrs and the late imam; and greetings to the grand leader and commander in chief of the forces, Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i. The Koran in the Islamic society has the first role in the guidance and salvation of human beings, and Muslims must in any case get as close to the Koran as possible and get accustomed to it. Hence, the light of our eyes, the youth and the young, boys and girls, and even their parents, must become familiar with the Koran in terms of recitation, memorization, and comprehension of meaning.

Considering the importance of the issue and the role of the Political Ideology Organization in the military, in order to increase the rule of the Koran among the honorable military personnel, especially among the members of their families, the Political Ideology Organization decided to establish the House of the Koran as an organization independent of other deputy directors' offices, so that, God willing, it can better pursue the goals of the organization in this area and perform its sacred service in connection with the military personnel as much as possible.

[SAFF] What role does the House of the Koran have in the organization?

[Quchani] The Koran is a human-building and guiding book for the whole human community. In this connection, the closer we get to the Koran, the more we benefit from divine grace; our hearts brighten with reading the Koran; and our minds become more aware, dynamic, and awake with the concepts of the Koran. Hence, considering the responsibility of the Political Ideology Organization of the Military of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a great part of this task can be assumed by the House of the Koran, which can address the ideological, moral, social, political, and military problems of the military personnel and also the members of their families through the Koran.

[SAFF] Do you have a special program for the use of Koranic experts in the "House of the Koran"?

[Quchani] In every activity that requires expertise, experts in that area must be used. Considering that activities in the House of the Koran also require Koranic experts, in order for the activities of the House of the Koran to be significant and successful throughout the military, it is necessary that we make maximum use of experienced experts, and whenever there is need for experts for the growth and expansion of Koranic activities, we will ask them to cooperate with the House of the Koran, so that, God willing, the House of the Koran will have more activities.

[SAFF] How do you evaluate the work of the House of the Koran since its establishment?

[Quchani] Thank God, the House of the Koran has had good and significant activity. Since the House of the Koran was founded in the military, various ground, air, and naval forces have been engaged in good activities, by the grace of God. The youth and young people of the border units, including soldiers, cadre, commissioned officers, and senior officers, have participated in Koranic issues and have had a significant presence in the competitions throughout the Armed Forces.

The activities have been relatively good, but man is always evolving and must perfect and expand his activities every day. Hence, we should not be satisfied with what we have had so far. We must make this unit as active as possible. Considering the extensive cultural activities that we intend to participate in to fight cultural invasion in the residential complexes and organizational housing of the military, one of the significant parts of these activities is Koranic activities.

Apparently, these activities in the residential complexes have not been engaged in very much so far through the Political Ideology channel. God willing, in the future, the activities of the House of the Koran will be much stronger than in the past.

[SAFF] What policy and program do you have for raising the quality of the activities of the House of the Koran throughout the Military of the Islamic Republic?

[Quchani] First, we must pay special attention to Koranic activities in the military units and organizational housing. For this reason, the House of the Koran was given independence, in order to operate independently and directly under the supervision of the director of the Political Ideology Organization of the Military, and in the Political Ideology Offices of the three forces under the supervision of the directors of the offices. This independence itself will be a more successful method for better work and achieving the goals of the organization. At the same time, the House of the Koran is responsible for making use of the experiences of all the Koranic organizations and units that are active throughout the country, examining and studying their projects, and making use of the best of them. In connection with attracting Koran teachers in the four areas of reading, pronunciation, memorization, and concepts also, the best teachers must be invited and attracted to teach various courses to the seekers and students of the Koran.

On the whole, we have prepared tapes for any individual that we want to familiarize with the Koran and are trying to increase them in quality and quantity. The military competitions must be held at the separate levels — the cadre, the duty personnel, and the members of the military families — and the winners of competition be commanded properly in order that, God willing, we will have numerous memorizers and reciters of the Koran among the military personnel and the members of their families and be proud of them.

[SAFF] In conclusion, if you have any other statement, please make it.

[Quchani] I thank the dear brothers involved in the House of the Koran in the organization and also the other units affiliated with the Political Ideology Organization and the military units. My request to the dear military brothers and the members of their families is that, if they want prosperity in this and the next world, they get closer to the Koran. If they want brightness of the heart and success in life, they must make use of the Koran. Imam Sadeq, peace be upon him, said:

"Brighten your home by reciting the Koran." In every home and location where the sound of Koran recitation is heard as the Koran is being read, much of the calamities and tragedies will be ejected; blessings will come to it; and God will send His mercy to that mosque, home, and place. Familiarize your children with the Koran yourselves, because acting on the instructions of the Koran follows familiarity with the Koranic concepts. The more familiar we become with Koranic concepts, the closer we get to God, the closer we get to the guardianship of the pure imams, and the more God will be pleased with us.

Iran: Reader Complains About Kermanshah Agricultural Policies

LD1006172296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 8 Jun 96 p 4

[From readers' column entitled: "Hello Salam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified reader] I would like to put several questions to the local officials of Kermanshah Province. First question: Last year I sold my maize crop at 300 rials per kilo. This year I went to buy maize from the Agriculture Ministry department to plant as seed, the price is fixed at 4,650 rials per kilo. Why should they charge such a high price for the seed, which is treated with fungicides?

My second questions: The quality of the chick-pea crop grown in this province is very good. However, last year we were not allowed to export our surplus crop to the Arab states of the Persian Gulf region and Pakistan. As a result thousands of tonnes of chick-peas are rotting in Kermanshah's wholesalers.

My third and final question: The farmers are desperate because they cannot afford the astronomical prices charged for fertilizer, pesticides, engine oil, farm machinery, and equipment. I am expecting a reply from the esteemed officials.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Suspects in Murder of U.S. Consulate Officials Arrested

BK1006124896 Islamabad AL-AKHBAR in Urdu 10 Jun 96 pp 1, 7

[PPI report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Karachi: Karachi police have claimed to have succeeded in locating and arresting the culprits involved in the murder of two U.S. Consulate officials in Karachi. Both assassins have been arrested in Sanghar. According to a report, they were being protected by very important Sanghar personalities. Four prominent persons have also been arrested in connection with the case.

According to the source, Mary Kennedy, the U.S. consul general in Karachi, met Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah upon receiving reports about the arrests. She expressed the hope that the whole gang of terrorists and saboteurs will be arrested soon. Kennedy has also informed the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad about the arrest of the culprits.

Pakistan: Bhutto Denies Acquiring Property in England

BK1006161796 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said those who do not believe in democracy and people's rule are out to malign democratic leadership to fulfill their nefarious designs. She was talking to newsmen at the Parliament House in Islamabad this afternoon. The prime minister strongly denied acquiring any property at Surrey in England, France or in any other country for the last two and half years. The politics of corruption was started by late General Ziaul Haq to breed a new brand of politicians in the country to replace the old and respected leadership. She said we believe in clean politics which has nothing to do with corruption. She said the charges, which have been fabricated against her by Nawaz's [Pakistan Muslim] League, are totally concocted, malicious and tendentious and do not contain an iota of truth. She said those who have leveled these charges must substantiate them.

Pakistan: Bhutto Claims 'Conspiracies' To Remove Government

BK1006143896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said her government is trying to put national economy on strong foundations and signs are that the country will have a prosperous future. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad at her parliamentary chamber, she said inflation is coming down and budgetary deficit would be brought down to four percent next year. The prime minister said the country would need additional resources of 25 billion rupees to reduce deficit financing, 22 billion rupees extra for debt repayment and 16 billion rupees in defense oriented matters which would largely be spent on commutations and pensions as 50,000 men retire every year from the armed forces. The prime minister clarified that this money will not go on additionalities to defense equipment, but to pay for the existing facilities. She said given Pakistan's security and sensitivity, it would not be in our security interests to have an open debate on defense expenditure.

Answering a question, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said the government was successful in countering mini-insurgency in Karachi and that there was now no danger to the integrity of Pakistan. They are committed to providing peace to the people and are against sectarianism, ethnicity, and arms culture. The politics of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] is based on principles and they are not power hungry. She has already issued instructions that no license should be issued for non-prohibited [as heard] bore weapons.

The prime minister categorically denied the allegation of the leader of the opposition that she has purchased any house or property in England and said she has no property in the United States, Britain, or France. She described these allegations as dirty tricks campaign launched by the disinformation cell of the opposition for character assassination of the elected prime minister. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said the leader of the opposition has no credibility after plundering money of cooperatives. She said they had begun the character assassination campaign to divert attention of the people from their own corruption.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto rejected charges of corruption and said wherever pointed out, the government took immediate action and certain heads of departments and corporations were immediately removed. She said certain vested interests were busy in hatching conspiracies of removing the elected government before March next year, but, she said, with the blessings of almighty God and support of the people, the government will remain in office and their nefarious designs would not succeed.

The prime minister condemned assassination attempt on Mr. Gazanfal Gul, PPP MNA [Member of National Assembly], in Islamabad today. She said the attackers have been arrested and Mr. Gazanfal Gul had identified one of them.

Pakistan: Secretariat Denies Bhutto Purchased UK Mansion

BK1006153896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Jun 96 pp 1, 9

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: A spokesman of the Prime Minister's Secretariat has contradicted a report published in SUNDAY EXPRESS, London and lifted by some national newspapers alleging that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari had purchased mansion in Surrey.

Describing the report as baseless and malicious the spokesman said that since becoming Prime Minister in 1993, she had been to London only twice — once for a meeting there and the second time when she was in transit. The Prime Minister had never been to Surrey had never met any estate agent and had not purchased any property there.

Pakistan: Counsel Asked To Sue UK Paper Over Property Allegations

BK1106072596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, MNA [Member of National Assembly], has asked his counsel in London to sue the SUNDAY EXPRESS for publishing a news item about the alleged purchase of a mansion in Surrey. He said in Islamabad that the publication of the fabricated news was aimed at damaging the reputation of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her family. Mr. Zardari said it is not for the first time that her political rivals have come up with this sort of tactic, which is totally baseless.

Pakistan: Tank Deal With Ukraine To Be Concluded Before 30 Jun

BK1006122896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 10 Jun 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan and Ukraine are at a very advanced stage to strike a deal under which Kiev will provide 300 plus new main battle tanks (MBTs), currently rated as the best mobile vehicle in the Soviet system.

"Technical discussions between the two countries have almost been completed, and the deal will be finalized within next few weeks," said official sources.

They said: "Talk on the financial package and the mode of payments, coupled with terms and conditions of the $450 to $600 million T-80UD deal will start shortly."

Highly-placed-sources said the Ukranian T-80UD had been selected following a comprehensive evaluation and trials of three vehicles: T-80UD (Kiev), T-72 (Polish) and T-86(China). "Towards the end of 1995, a military delegation, comprising all the technical people from Pakistan, visited Ukraine for inspection of facilities which help manufacture the vehicle, besides assessing and witnessing the capabilities of spares and logistic support system," said the sources.

These sources say spares of T-80UD are not only available in Ukraine and Russia, but these can also be bought from several other independent states of the Commonwealth.

"Pakistan, however, is buying spares along with tanks, with the possibility of making them in Pakistan through transfer of technology," said the sources.

Defense sources confirmed that the T-80UD is the "best vehicle" in the Russian system, which will be inducted into the Pakistan Army for the first time".

Ukraine, said the sources, has also offered parts and training package, and the whole deal with cost Pakistan around $1.5 million per vehicle.

"Things are moving very fast, as the Pakistan-Ukraine tank deal has to be concluded before June 30 following which Kiev will start manufacturing new vehicles to be delivered to Pakistan in phase," said the sources.

Pakistan: Islamabad Reports 3 Killed in 2 Bomb Explosions

BK1006162196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three people were reported killed and some others injured in two bomb explosions in the main bazaar of Kamoke today. The explosions also caused some damage to some shops. Rescue measures are underway and investigations into the incident have started.

Pakistan: 7 Killed, Dozens Injured in 3 Bomb Blasts

BK1006160196 Hong Kong AFP in English 1543 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, Pakistan, June 10 (AFP) — At least seven people were killed and dozens injured Monday [10 June] when three bombs rocked Pakistan's industrial city of Gujranwala, police said.

The first bomb ripped through a passenger bus, killing four people and injuring 19 others. Almost simultaneously, two more bombs went off in the nearby Kamoke bazaar, killing three people, including a 10-year old boy.

Police said at least 25 people were injured as the blasts destroyed two shops. Rescue workers were busy removing the debris, they said.

Police said the bomb on the bus, which was carrying about 30 people from Lahore, exploded as it neared Gujranwala, 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of here.

Police believe the explosive device was planted in the rear of the bus.

More than 70 people have been killed in a wave of bomb blasts which have gripped the country's key province of Punjab since April.

Six people were killed here when a bomb exploded in a charity cancer hospital funded by Pakistan's cricketer-turned-politician, Imran Khan, on April 14.

At least 52 people were killed when a bomb exploded in a bus in Bhai Phero, near Lahore, on April 28.

Eight people were killed in another blast on a passenger bus in Sheikhupura near here on May 8, while a bomb exploded in a post office building in Lahore on May 26, killing one and injuring two people.

The authorities have blamed the bombings on the Indian secret service but no evidence have been provided so far.

Pakistan: Death Toll Rises to 8 in Gujranwala, Kamoke Blasts

BK1106040496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Eight persons were killed and 45 others injured in three separate explosions in Gujranwala and Kamoke town yesterday. The first explosion took place in a Gujranwala bound passenger bus at Gujranwala bypass killing two persons on the spot. Three others succumbed to their injuries in the hospital. The second and third blasts occurred in Kamoke one after the other at different places killing three persons and injuring some others.

The Punjab governor, retired Lieutenant General Raja Saroop Khan, has expressed shock and grief over the tragic incident. The governor directed the administration to look into the cause of the blast and apprehend the culprits at the earliest.

The Punjab senior minister, Malik Mushtaq Ahmad Awan, visited the injured persons in the hospitals in Kamoke and Gujranwala and assured best possible medical facilities to them. He distributed checks amounting to 30,000 rupees for each of the bereaved family and 10,000 rupees for each injured person.

Pakistan: People's Party Leader Views Achievements of Government

BK1106072696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addressing a news conference in Karachi, the secretary general PPP [Pakistan People's Party], Senator Sheikh Rafiq Ahmed, has said, along with the developmental activities, the government has controlled the law and order situation and the menace of narcotics. He said Pakistan People's Party fully enjoys the confidence of the people, and its popularity among masses has increased due to welfare-oriented projects launched by the government.

Pakistan: Sources Indicate 'Ugly Picture' in Coming Budget

BK1006084096 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 9 Jun 96 pp 1, 12

[Report by Nadeem Malik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — For the first time in the country's history the budget 1996-97, will present an ugly picture where all tax revenue will be eaten up by debt-servicing and defense and the government may indeed have to borrow some money to meet these two obligations.

According to the sources privy to the budget making process, total tax revenue target for next fiscal year will be Rs [rupees] 310 billion, whereas budgetary projections for debt-servicing and defense will go up to Rs 311.5 billion.

The budgetary allocation for debt-servicing is being projected at Rs 184 billion, and for defense at Rs 127.5 billion.

Sources, however, said that "budgetary allocation for defense is being reduced further as a percentage of GDP, but it is necessary to provide adequate resources for defense in view of the regional security scenario." Sources asserted that the allocation was less than current year's at Rs 115.254, in actual terms, calculating the rate of inflation of 11 percent (approx.) and equal amount of devaluation of rupee. "Even to keep it at the current year's level, defense will need more, but due to resource crunch, and donors' pressure, it is being reduced as a percentage of GDP", sources maintained.

They confided that the Income Tax/Wealth Tax target for next fiscal year will be Rs 94 billion, with more emphasis on direct taxation. The government, in accordance with the policy guidelines of International Monetary Fund (IMF), has planned a shift from trade-related taxes to direct taxes and Sales Tax for the next fiscal year.

The agriculture sector is also being taxed in the next budget as it has been agreed to with the IMF. But keeping in mind the tricky nature of the issue, ECC [Economic Coordination Committee] has rejected tile proposal for flat rate income tax on agriculture and a new proposal of evaluating the net income through farming for taxation purposes is under consideration.

The agriculture sector which yielded only Rs 2.9 million in taxes last year is under strong criticism from within the country and by the donors. Most of the governments under pressure from the feudals — majority of them are members of parliament, both in the government and the opposition — could never succeed in imposing agriculture tax.

The Sales Tax target for next fiscal year is being projected at Rs 69 billion as against the Rs 50.7 billion for the current fiscal year. All exemptions at the import and manufacturing stage are being withdrawn except for brick kilns.

However, the government is unlikely to extend General Sales Tax (GST) into a more broad based Value-Added Tax (VAT) at retail level in 1996-97. Exemption of sales tax for unprocessed food, fertilizers and pesticides would also remain available during the next fiscal year.

According to knowledgeable sources the sales tax will be imposed at the rate of 15 percent and it would cover an additional 400 items. About two years ago, about 225 items were put to tax at import and manufacturing stage, which provoked enormous reaction from business community and general public.

Customs duty collection target for next fiscal year is being raised to Rs 96 billion. There is little likelihood that government would reduce the tariffs and withdraw the regulatory duty on imports.

A few officials think that government will eliminate the regulatory duty imposed in October, 1995, but it is unlikely to reduce the tariffs to 55 percent.

Sources confided that elimination of regulatory duty will cause a loss of Rs 9 billion and if the tariffs are reduced to 55 percent at the same time it would mean, Rs 9 billion more reduction in revenues. The government pursuing a 4 percent fiscal deficit for next fiscal year, as against 5.2 percent deficit during the current fiscal year, would not slash both of them.

The budget deficit target for next fiscal year is being projected to Rs 90 billion. It is also expected that if both regulatory duty and 65 percent tariff level remain in place, the customs duty target may be raised to Rs 103 billion, aggregating additional taxation of Rs 4 billion.

The Central Excise Duty (CED) target for next fiscal year is being raised to Rs 52 billion as against Rs 50.8 billion during the current fiscal year.

The over-all tax revenue target for next fiscal year would be Rs 310 billion, as against the third revised target (after October, 1995 SBA [Stand-By Agreement] Package with IMF) of Rs 275 billion for the current fiscal year. Government is estimating a total of Rs 35 billion new taxes, Rs 18 to Rs 20 billion more due to broadening of Sales Tax net and by eliminating exemptions and Rs 1.5 billion by imposing agriculture Income Tax and the remaining through other taxation measures and better tax collection.

The Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) of Rs 104.751 billion for next fiscal year has already been approved, whereas there is no final figure for the current expenditures and the overall budgetary outlay. If one goes by the speech of prime minister it should be around Rs 500 billion with the civil government expenditures of Rs 47 billion. Sources confided that, the figure-game for the next budget is at the final shape of the budget would only be available, just a day before the presentation of the budget.

It is expected that government would announce several increases in utility charges like 16.5 percent increase in electricity charges and 6 percent increase in gas charges during July, 1996. A further increase in petroleum prices is also feared, but could not be confirmed.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Police Stations Open in Jaffna; 400,000 People Return

BK1006140696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Work related to police is returning to normal in the Jaffna peninsula. Minor complaints have been received as police stations opened in Jaffna. Police stations have been set up in Palali, Kankesanthurai, (Vellalai), Achchuveli, Point Pedro, Kopay, Jaffna, Chavakachcheri, and (Khai). Another station will be soon opened at Chunnakam. It is hoped to establish two more at Velvettiturai and (Chankantanai). The Jaffna training center is now preparing personnel [word indistinct] for these stations. Four hundred thousand persons have returned to Jaffna. A civil aviation service has been launched and this will pave the way for the return of more persons from Colombo and Kilinochchi.

Sri Lanka: Grocery Shops, Other Essential Services Reopen in Jaffna

BK1106044596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A private bus operator will start a public passenger service in Jaffna. Trade stalls, textile shops, groceries, and pharmacies have already been reopened in the area. This was clear evidence that the people of Jaffna numbering 500,000 have total confidence in the government and its capability of safeguarding them from LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorism and extortion. Jaffna traders who have come to Colombo to make purchases told LANKAPUVATH that they have made arrangements with the government to ship 300,000 metric tons of popular consumables other than the essential [words indistinct]. (?With) the first of these shipments to Jaffna, private traders left Colombo yesterday on board the freighter (Rohanan). They included three brand new teams of buses, bicycles, agricultural equipment, textiles, groceries, pharmaceuticals, and even items like sweets and chocolates.

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